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ON BEING CREATIVE

by Irving Babbitt

THE recent debate on humanism supplied ample evidence that the "great confusion", predicted by Sainte-Beuve, is now upon us. Though the confusion is European as well as American, in this country it may be said to be worse confounded. Greater havoc has been wrought here than in Europe by the new education, an education that has been concerned with anything rather than with the transmission of "the best that has been thought and said in the world". As a rule it is only by the assimilation of this "best" that one may hope to build up critical standards. The impression one got from the humanistic debate was that our critical standards have suffered even more severely than had been suspected. It would be possible to compile from the utterances of the anti-humanist critics a pendent to the amusing skit by Pope and others on the Art of Sinking in Poetry. Outstanding examples of the Art of Sinking in Criticism are Mrs. Mary Colum's assertion that Aristotle's literary taste, as revealed in the *Poetics*, was of the kind we associate with the tired business man—the kind that inclines "to good detective stories and melodrama"; also the assertion of Mr. Edmund Wilson that the characters of Sophocles have no more ethical substance than those of Mr. Eugene O'Neill.* One is justified in speaking of a cultural collapse when critics can make such assertions without at once being brought to book by a considerable body of readers. In its extreme form the denial of standards has amounted to a repudiation of the two chief traditions of the occident, the classical and the Christian. According to Mr. Fausset, all orthodox and "official" Christians have been wrong in their interpretation of Jesus; according to Mr. Henry Hazlitt, anyone who makes a plea for decorum must be a Caspar Milquetoast. Even those who allow a place for the religious and

* See *The New Republic*, March 19, 1930, p. 115: "They [i.e. the Sophoclean characters] are as violent and as harsh as the people in the plays of Eugene O'Neill." [Sophocles displays masterly qualities as a dramatic artist, but only to the end of showing us] "spending themselves against each other the rages, the affections, the loyalties, of so many passionate persons, and all to die in the clear air, leaving only with the echo of their tirades the vibration of the taut verse."

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humanistic virtues in life hold that they are irrelevant in art and letters; here creative genius should have unimpeded sway. Some of the chief points at issue, indeed, between humanist and anti-humanist converge upon this idea of creation. According to their opponents, the humanists are sterile souls who seek to dam up the spontaneity of the true artists and force them back into the pinfold of the "genteel tradition".

It is well to remember that these anti-traditionalists have themselves behind them a considerable tradition. Their notion of creativeness has come down essentially unmodified from the eighteenth century; it is an outgrowth of the primitivistic opposition established about that time between the "natural" and the "artificial". As a result of this opposition there was a growing prepossession in favor of the uncultivated epoch and the uncultivated individual. To be accounted an original genius one must, according to the more advanced primitivist, be positively hirsute. "Poetry", as Diderot put it, "calls for something enormous, barbaric and savage." To be cultivated is to be imitative; whereas if one is to create, one must be imaginatively and emotionally spontaneous. From this repudiation of imitation in favor of spontaneity have flowed innumerable consequences down to the present day, not merely in art and literature but in life.

The originality of the creator was conceived almost from the start, not only as spontaneous, but as something over which he has little control. "An original", we read in Edward Young (1759), "may be said to be of a vegetable nature. . . . It grows, it is not made." For "vegetable" Coleridge, in the wake of the Germans, substituted "organic" —still an epithet to conjure with. Here is the point of departure for the distinction between genius and mere talent of which the early romantics made so much. According to Hazlitt "talent is a voluntary power, while genius is involuntary". In short the man who knows what he is about is not a genius. The contrast between the organic and spontaneous and the merely imitative and mechanical is closely connected with the predominant interest in the unconscious, as compared with the conscious, which has assumed so many forms from the eighteenth century down to the psycho-analysts. Carlyle makes of the unconscious the source not merely of creative genius but of religious wisdom. "The difference between Socrates and Jesus Christ!" he exclaims. "The Great Conscious! The immeasurably greater Unconscious! The one cunningly manufactured; the other created, living and life-giving," et cetera.

The association of creation with spontaneity involved not merely an emancipation of the instincts and emotions but also, as I have just remarked, of the imagination. The emergence of the phrase "creative imagination" marks a decisive step in the break with neo-classicism. The creativeness of the imagination is measured, as anyone who has been through the "genius" books of the eighteenth century will testify, not by its truth to the universal, but by its attainment of novelty. A boundless intoxication with novelty is indeed the outstanding trait of the modern era that sets it off from all the ages of the past. In literature and the arts this has meant an almost exclusive emphasis on invention. A major factor in the discrediting of the principle of imitation in favor of invention has no doubt been the prodigious achievements of physical science. The artists and men of letters have sought to vie in wonderfulness with their scientific brethren. Their inventions and novelties have not, however, met the test of reality like the discoveries of science. They have been to a great extent the result of allowing one's imagination to expatiate at large in some "empire of chimeras" or else of a striving to express the ineffable something wherein one differs from other men—what Mr. Brownell terms one's uniquity. It may be said indeed that, as a consequence of over a century of the indulgence of idiosyncrasy, the cup of our uniquity is

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full to overflowing. An idea of creation, one-sided from the start, has finally led in its extreme forms to a veritable cult of the subrational and the abnormal. In all its forms it reflects our modern drift towards naturalism. The very epithet "creative" was once reserved for what is above nature—as, for example, in the old Latin hymn "*Veni Creator Spiritus*". The growth of the naturalistic temper may be measured by the gap between this use of the epithet and the use of it that appears in such phrases as "creative chemistry" and "creative salesmanship".

I

If we really wish to clarify this whole subject of creation we need to go farther back than the modern or even than the medieval period to the sources of occidental thinking in Plato and Aristotle. Plato is more responsible than any other one person for a notion that has enjoyed great popularity down the centuries—the notion that the poet if he is to be truly creative must be "furious" or "mad". In the somewhat enigmatical dialogue *Ion*, the notion assumes a form that reminds one, at least superficially, of the primitivistic cult of the unconscious and the spontaneous. "Whilst a man retains any portion of the thing called reason", says the Platonic Socrates, "he is utterly incompetent to produce poetry." *Ion* has as a rule been taken to be highly flattering to the poet; but, assuming that the dialogue is by Plato at all, one is inclined to suspect in it an elaborate irony designed to show the inferiority of the poet to the Socratic dialectician. The obvious comment on the opposition Plato sets up between creation and general culture is that it simply does not correspond to the facts of great poetry, so far as we know them. In the case of at least one great poet, Dante, we are not left to conjecture. "Let the folly of those persons be confessed," he writes, "who, lacking art and knowledge and trusting their genius alone, rush forward to sing of the highest themes in the highest way; let them desist from such great folly and, if they are geese by their native sloth, let them not seek to imitate the star-gazing eagle." The Platonic theory of poetic inspiration has served only too often to encourage the conceit of minor poets; it also led to the grotesque attempts of certain pseudo-classic critics to retain poetic fury and at the same time subject it to rules. Father Mambrun, for example, says that the writer of an epic should not be furious in framing his plot, but may sprinkle in a little poetic fury in his episodes.

Moreover the question may be raised whether all those who invoke Plato are to be accounted his true followers. One of the most recent critics to proclaim that the poet should be "mad" is Mr. J. E. Spingarn. Is the madness that he praises really of the Platonic type? If we are to do justice to Plato's theory of inspiration we must interpret it in the total spirit of his writings. When thus interpreted, it will be found to look forward to the Christian doctrine of divine grace; whereas the spontaneity of the primitivist is a sort of subrational parody of this doctrine, a substitution, as one may say, for the grace of God of the grace of Nature. When Mr. Spingarn urges us in the name of creation to get rid of both inner and outer inhibitions and let ourselves go,* it would seem fairly evident that he is primitivistic rather than Platonic. Only an extreme primitivist, one might suppose, could affirm, as he did some years ago, that "the art of a child is art quite as much as that of Michelangelo".†

The whole subject is to be sure extremely elusive. It is especially fitting in dealing with the creative process to recall the old saying: "All things end in a mystery". One encounters here even more promptly than elsewhere a something indefinable—what the French of the seventeenth century were wont to call a *je ne sais quoi*. Divine grace itself is, according to Father Bouhours, a *je ne sais*

* See *Creative Criticism*, p. 120.

† *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. xi, No. 12, p. 327.

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quoi. One may, however, discriminate practically and concretely between things, which, in their ultimate essence, elude us and must ever elude us. The problem of poetic "madness" is very much bound up with that of enthusiasm. There is a super-rational enthusiasm that one may properly associate with Plato at his best. This quality of enthusiasm, as it manifests itself in the great poets and religious seers, has been defined as "exalted peace". It is important to distinguish between the Platonic enthusiasm and that of the primitivist, if one is to deal adequately with the problem of creation. At bottom the primitivist recognizes only one form of enthusiasm, his own. The opposition he established in the eighteenth century between the original genius, on the one hand, and, on the other, the pseudo-classic formalist and dry rationalist is still current. One of the most popular forms of this opposition is found in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*. Dionysos, as there presented, stands for the creative urge, Apollo for a merely formalistic control and Socrates for an uninspired rationalism. But there is also an Apollonian enthusiasm, even worthier of the name, on strictly etymological grounds, than the Dionysiac intoxication, which, as Nietzsche understands it, is plainly emotional; inasmuch as exalted peace would seem to be more "divine" than mere emotion, however vehement. Perhaps there is nothing higher in man than the spirit that shapes and controls and sets bounds to every form of lawless expansion. In art and literature this spirit is felt, in contrast with technique or outer form, as inner form or "soul", if one may venture to employ a word that has been almost hopelessly cheapened by the emotionalists. Spenser uses the word in its older Platonic sense when he says that "Soul is form and doth the body make".

II

If it is important in dealing with our notion of creativeness to distinguish between a true and a false Platonism it is even more important to deal adequately with the doctrine of imitation; for the whole modern movement can be shown to be rooted in a revolt from this doctrine. For a sound doctrine of imitation we need to turn from Plato to Aristotle. Plato conceived of imitation in the arts as something literal and uninspired and therefore so disparaged it as to prepare the way for later obscurantists; whereas Aristotle bends his whole effort to showing that imitation may be ideal, or, as we should say, creative. It becomes creative in direct proportion as it succeeds in rendering the universal through the particular. Poetry that has been thus successful has *spoudaiotes*, the term that Matthew Arnold (probably following Goethe) has rendered "high seriousness". Chapter IX of the *Poetics*, in which Aristotle insists on the representative and highly serious quality of great poetry, disposes once for all of Mrs. Colum's contention that the treatise is written from the point of view of the tired business man. Yet Mrs. Colum is right in a sense in thinking that if Aristotle's *Poetics* were discredited the whole structure of classicism would collapse at the base; not that classicism rests on the authority of Aristotle or any other authority as such, but that it does require in some form or other a doctrine of the universal and that the *Poetics* contains the earliest and still, on the whole, the most satisfactory account of the process of creative imitation by which the artist may hope to achieve the universal.

Aristotle's *katharsis*, the most discussed term in criticism, can be interpreted rightly only in the light of his doctrine of the universal. A great tragedy portrays passion and portrays it vividly; at the same time it generalizes it. The spectator who is thus lifted into the atmosphere of the universal tends to be purged of everything that is petty and purely personal in his own emotions. He partakes in some measure of the exalted peace that is felt in the background of true tragedy. He is "dismissed", in Milton's phrase, with

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"calm of mind all passion spent". One should note in passing that the treatise "On the Sublime" attributed to Longinus, which contrasts sharply by its genuinely Platonic temper with the dryly analytical *Poetics*, yet agrees with it in an essential particular: the Longinian sublimity or elevation requires, like the Aristotelian high seriousness, truth to the universal.

Finally, if one is to grasp Aristotle's full meaning, one needs to connect what he says about the universal not only with what he says about *katharsis* but also with what he says about "myth" or fiction. The poet who seeks to be representative must, like Homer, know how to tell lies skilfully. He must, in short, be a master of illusion, but the illusion should, as Goethe puts it, be that of a higher reality. The advantage of this whole conception is that it is not theoretical: it simply states the effect actually produced upon one by artistic and literary creation of the first order.

The neo-classics, in taking over from Aristotle the idea of probability or truth to the universal, tended to eliminate from it the element of illusion or, as we should say, the imaginative element. Moreover, they hoped to achieve their universal not so much by the direct imitation of "nature" (in the Aristotelian sense, human nature in purposeful action) as by the imitation of models, of those writers whose reputations were consecrated by a constant and general admiration (the Longinian test of literary excellence), and who were therefore presumed to be a sort of "second nature". The imitation of models, it is well to remember, is not necessarily barren. Many of the neo-classics showed that this type of imitation is compatible with genuine creation. Pope, for example, is genuinely creative in his imitation of Horace's Epistle to Augustus. The imitation of models is legitimate, as Joubert says, provided that it be the imitation of one spirit by another spirit and not of one book by another book. The imitation of many of the minor neo-classics was, it must be admitted, of this latter kind and so degenerated into mere copyism.

The primitivists had at least this excuse in rejecting the whole principle of imitation as a pseudo-classic convention, and in beginning their long warfare on culture in the name of creative spontaneity. The evident drawback of linking creativeness with spontaneity rather than with imitation is that it leads to a loss of the representative quality. The moderns, whether impressionists or expressionists, romantics or realists, would seem to have achieved to a lesser degree than the creators of certain epochs of the past, the "grandeur of generality". The drift towards eccentricity has also been encouraged by the purely exploratory attitude towards life of physical science—an attitude that when carried over into the realm of human values may easily degenerate into pseudo-science. Taine, for example, is pseudo-scientific when he declares that "sleep, madness, delirium, somnambulism, hallucination, offer a much more profitable field of experiment for the psychology of the individual than the normal state". As the result of a one-sided devotion to the divergent and the exceptional on the part of various brands of naturalists, we have become incapable, according to M. Léon Séché, of creating general types. "The abnormal, the monstrous, the improbable alone attract our attention." It is well not to make such statements too sweepingly of one's contemporaries; yet the danger surely lies in the direction M. Séché has indicated. Jules Lemaître complained of the eccentrics of his day that they were turning literature into a "mysterious diversion of mandarins". The diversion has become even more mysterious since. Certain *surréalistes* have indeed proclaimed in the name of creation, conceived as pure self-expression, that the writer is under no obligation to communicate to the reader anything at all.

The same disparagement of communication in the interests of self-expression has been visible in the other arts—notably in

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painting. One may illustrate this point apropos of the remarkable assertion of Miss Rebecca West in a recent number of THE BOOKMAN, that Cézanne is the "heir of Poussin".* One may grant that there are peripheral overlappings between the two painters (Cézanne had a genuine admiration for Poussin), but these overlappings should not obscure the central divergence. All is not mere formalism in the neo-classic view, accepted by Poussin, that the painter should not depict ordinary nature but a selected and ennobled nature (*la belle nature*). Something of this finer symmetry and more perfect proportion he actually succeeds in conveying in his landscapes. This creative selection is not to be confounded with the creative distortion one finds in Cézanne and his followers, a distortion that, like so much else in modern art, has its source in an eagerness for lyrical self-expression.† In its extreme manifestations this eagerness has led to a denial that painting need concern itself with representation. Some of the modernist painters have gone even farther than the early German romantics who, in their desire to emancipate the creative imagination, proclaimed that the highest form of art is the arabesque.

One should note the transformation that has taken place in certain critical terms as a result of the divorce of the idea of creation from that of the universal. *Katharsis* has been appropriated by the psycho-analysts to describe the relief one gets by expressing oneself freely. The idea itself is at least as old as the romantic movement. Poetry, says Byron "is the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents the earthquake". The epithet sublime has also ceased to be associated with the universal. Elevation, which is primary in the Longinian definition of the term, has tended to give way to sheer emotional vehemence. Rousseau, for example, says that he was "sublime" in the eloquence he displayed in his philanderings with Madame d'Houdetot. The modernist movement abounds in persons who, like Mr. Spingarn, are for getting rid, at least in art, of both outer and inner inhibitions and letting themselves go and who, at the same time, set up as sublime "idealists".

Idealism of this sort leads inevitably to an era of "debunking". Unfortunately debunkers of the type of Mr. H. L. Mencken are part of the very disease they are attacking. They have got rid of the false sublime but not of the false *katharsis*. "The critic", says Mr. Mencken, "is first and last simply trying to express himself. . . . He is trying to achieve thereby for his own inner ego the grateful feeling of a function performed, a tension relieved, a *katharsis* attained which Wagner achieved when he wrote *Die Walküre* and a hen achieves every time she lays an egg." What Mr. Mencken understands by self-expression he has told us elsewhere: "An author like any other so-called artist is a man in whom the normal vanity of all men is so vastly exaggerated that he finds it a sheer impossibility to hold it in. His overpowering impulse is to gyrate before his fellow-men, flapping his wings and emitting defiant yells. This being forbidden by the polizei of all civilized countries, he takes it out by putting his yells on paper. Such is the thing called self-expression". Here, one must admit, is the ultimate worm's-eye view of both *katharsis* and self-expression. It is Mr. Mencken's special gift, indeed, to attain the ultimate worm's-eye view of most of the topics on which he touches. As a result of his efforts and those of his kind we have been getting rid not only of the false sublime but also of the true. We seem to be losing the very idea of nobility and elevation.*

III

It has been urged that the standard of high seriousness and truth to the universal has

* *Bookman*, August, 1930, p. 517.

† For the relationship between the theory and practice of Cézanne and the expressionistic exaggerations of certain recent painters see *Modern Painting* by F. J. Mather, p. 334 ff.

* See the essay *Farewell to Achilles* by Alan Reynolds Thompson (*Bookman*, January, 1930).

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always been impracticably high and has tended to blind those who have accepted it to the merits of much genuinely creative art and literature both past and present. The late Stuart Sherman accused me in particular of erecting a "*chevaux-de-frise* of arbitrary definition warranted to eviscerate every gizzard and break every neck born into this disastrous world since Aristotle". It is only fair to Sherman to add that he made this absurd statement in a moment of irritation and in a private letter. If publishers confined themselves to printing "highly serious" books, either new or old, most of them would be bankrupt in a very few months. No sensible person would maintain that the creative imitation expounded by Aristotle exhausts the idea of creation. Books may minister to utility or recreation or wisdom. To books in all three classes the epithet "creative" may in some sense or other be applied. One cannot discriminate between one class and another simply by an appeal to the principle of pleasure. Aristotle says that tragedy should give its own appropriate pleasure; but then a cook-book may also give its appropriate pleasure. The two pleasures are, however, of a very different order. If Aristotle were living today, it is conceivable that he might in his recreative moments find solace in a good detective story. What is not conceivable is that he would put fiction of this quality on a level with the representative fiction he has described in his *Poetics*. One should add that work that belongs in the recreative class may transcend infinitely in merit detective stories and the like. Some of the best of the world's poetry has been less concerned with a deeper interpretation of the facts of life than with an escape from them. Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale* is an especially exquisite poem of escape.

The great problem is to avoid a confusion of categories. Humanist and anti-humanist have each accused the other of a confusion of this kind. If the humanist makes a plea for the literature of wisdom he is told by the anti-humanist that he speaks not as a literary critic but as a philosopher. The literary critic does not allow alien ethical considerations to intrude into the realm of art, holding as he does that beauty is its own excuse for being. High seriousness, according to President Neilson of Smith, is something that may be left to divines; the poet should be satisfied if he attains intensity. The point of view is related to a notion that dates from the dawn of the modernist movement—namely, that there is no intermediary term between mere moralism and esthetic irresponsibility. Creative work, in order to be accounted highly serious, does not need to aim primarily at edification, as certain neoclassic critics were too prone to suppose; it does need to have centrality of vision or, if one prefers, to be informed by an imagination that is disciplined to some truly human norm. Such a criterion may seem difficult and elusive, but it is the only one that is finally valid.

Let us turn to the confusion of categories with which the humanist charges his modernist opponent. Here again everything hinges on the quality of imagination displayed by the creator. Numerous persons whose imaginations were really "wandering wild" in some "empire of chimeras" have during the past century set up as philosophic teachers and even as religious seers, and been received as such by critics and public. For instance, Professor C. H. Herford asserts that Shelley has in *Prometheus Unbound* given "magnificent expression to the faith of Plato and of Christ". The confusion revealed by such an utterance is far graver than that of the neo-classic who thought he was highly serious when he was in fact only didactic.

The person who wishes to avoid primitivistic and other confusions needs to be keenly critical. Anyone who is thus critical will protest first of all against the sharp line that is now drawn between critics and creators with a view to disparaging the former. Our writers have fallen into a veritable cant

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on the subject of creation. The ordinary distinction between creative and critical writing is to be sure convenient and indeed inevitable. At the same time one should remember that an even more fundamental distinction than that between criticism and creation is that between good and bad literature. Good literature may be defined as literature which combines excellence of form with soundness of substance. Much writing that is usually classified as critical will be found to satisfy this definition. A great critic is a rare apparition—even rarer, according to Tennyson, than a great poet. One should not therefore deny the element of truth in the notion that there is a hierarchy of genres. A great poet, especially a great dramatic poet, deserves to outrank even a great critic. What is absurd is to disparage a good critic as compared with some inferior poet or novelist on the ground that he is less creative. One should beware of the same error in dealing with the different works of one author. Is Dryden less creative in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* than in *Aurengzebe,* or Johnson less creative in the *Lives of the Poets* than in *Irene*, or Sainte-Beuve less creative in the *Lundis* than in *Volupté*? In that case so much the worse for creation.

According to Miss Rebecca West, the superiority of Aristotle to Rousseau is so generally recognized that anyone who asserts it will have the air of "exhibiting as a rare jewel" something that is really "about as rare as a nickel".* Now Rousseau probably did more than anyone else to associate creation with the uttering of one's uniqueness and so to usher in the age of genius. Miss West makes clear her own affiliations when she repudiates the members of the humanistic group as creatively impotent in comparison with the ultra-modernists. Mr. More, one is led to infer, is less creative in the five volumes of *The Greek Tradition* (which Miss West seems nevertheless to admire) than, let us say, Mr. James Joyce in his *Work in Progress.*

* *Bookman*, August, 1930, p. 516.

It is only too plain that Miss West herself must be numbered among those whom Mr. More has termed "the victims of genius". The Rousseauistic fallacies that have ensnared so clever a person cannot be dismissed as merely trite and obvious.

IV

There is a sense in which the critic may aspire to be creative but one needs to define with extreme care what this sense is. The creative critic, as currently conceived, is only a variant of the original genius. The impression he receives from the creative expression of another is so vivid and so colored by his temperamental uniqueness that, when re-expressed, it deserves, he holds, to count as a fresh creation. Creative criticism in this sense is in germ in the tendency of the older romantics to set up gusto as a substitute for taste. Critics like Hazlitt and Lamb display a keenness of literary relish that is often not only delectable in itself but legitimate, though even in Hazlitt and Lamb the relish prevails unduly at times over judgment. One's enjoyment of Lamb's essay on "The Artificial Comedy of the Last Century", for example, needs to be tempered by the reflection that it has little relation to the facts. A pleasant paradox like Lamb's is occasionally justified by way of protest against an unduly smug acquiescence in the orthodox view. If, however, one follows the trend down to Oscar Wilde (*The Critic as Artist*) one finds a creativeness that is plainly anarchical, a creativeness that relieves the critic of allegiance to anything that might serve as a check on the wanderings of his imagination and sensibility.

It is possible to attach an entirely different meaning to the epithet creative as applied to the critic. There is need of a type of critic who will essay the task, especially difficult under existing circumstances, of creating standards. Without standards there can be no center of judgment to which to refer the

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mere welter of appearances. Lacking this center, other forms of creation will become unstructural and so sink to a comparatively low level. As a result of the failure to achieve thus far any such coördinating principle of unity, the whole modern experiment is in danger of assuming the aspect of a return to chaos.

The coördinating principle has as a rule been supplied by tradition. A striking trait of the modernist on the other hand, as should be sufficiently clear from all I have said, is that he is not merely untraditional but antitraditional in his notions of creation. He hopes in his own phrase to base his originality on "certain enormous repudiations". The true modern, in contradistinction to the modernist, holds that tradition is indispensable. It does not mean for him, however, a return to dogma but rather a completion and enrichment of present experience by that of the past. In casting about for a concrete example of someone who has combined a modern outlook on life with a right attitude towards tradition one thinks almost inevitably of Goethe. The Goethe who is revealed, for example, in the *Conversations* with Eckermann is fairly free from the fallacies of the age of genius (including a number in which he had himself indulged). Anyone who is seeking a reintegration of judgment in criticism and an escape from the present impressionistic-expressionistic imbroglio can scarcely afford to neglect him.

The person, however, who wishes to array Goethe on the side of judgment has to explain the curious circumstance that, as interpreted by Mr. Spingarn, he has been one of the sponsors for the highly modernistic theory of criticism and creation that has prevailed in this country of late years. According to Goethe, as cited by Spingarn,* the critic should ask himself the following questions: "What has the writer proposed to himself to do? and how far has he succeeded in carrying out his own plan?" A man is said once to have succeeded in carving images of the twelve apostles on a single cherry stone. A living German is reported to have constructed a perfect model of Cologne Cathedral out of two million and a half match sticks. The critic is apparently to be confined to congratulating such persons or those who undertake the literary equivalent on their success in accomplishing what they set out to do. But before attributing any such absurdity to Goethe let us verify Mr. Spingarn's quotation. We then discover that Goethe would have the critic ask a third question: "Was the author's plan reasonable and sensible?"* Mr. Spingarn owes the public an explanation of how he came to reduce Goethe's three questions to two, with the result of transforming him from an Aristotelian humanist into a Crocean esthete.

Goethe seems indeed in certain of his utterances to give a very subordinate place to the judicial element in criticism. One needs to remember in regard to such utterances that there is in criticism as elsewhere a truth and a counter-truth. The truth is that the critic worthy of the name must judge; the counter-truth is that he should base his judgment on the widest comprehension and sympathy. The humanistic critic does not cultivate exclusively either the truth or the counter-truth but mediates between them; only, according to the special conditions with which he has to deal, he may lean to one side or the other. Goethe leaned very strongly to the side of comprehension and sympathy as a corrective to the dogmatic narrowness of many of the critics of his time.

The present emergency is the exact opposite of the one that confronted Goethe. Open-

* *Creative Criticism*, p. 20.

* See Goethe's review of Manzoni's *Conte di Carmagnola* (*Jubiläums Ausgabe*, vol. 37, pp. 179-190). As a matter of fact Goethe has lifted the three questions bodily from the first paragraph of Manzoni's preface to this work. The portion of the review containing the questions appears correctly in *Goethe's Literary Essays: A Selection in English arranged by J. E. Spingarn* (p. 140). The omission of the third question in *Creative Criticism* was noted independently by Norman Foerster in his *American Criticism* (p. 119).

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mindedness is being glorified in the critic as an end in itself. As a matter of fact critics who were developing breadth but were in the process losing standards were beginning to appear even in Goethe's day. Thus A. W. Schlegel had extended his comprehension and sympathy over a wide area of art and literature, much of it intrinsically worth while, that had been either neglected or disparaged by the neo-classic critics. He could not, however, be trusted to apply to his immense acquisition a correct scale of values. "I look upon his treatment of the French drama", said Goethe, "as a sort of recipe for the formation of a bad critic." There could be no doubt, Goethe admitted, as to his great learning; but then, he added, "All the learning in the world is still no judgment".

This latter remark is especially relevant to our contemporary world except that its breadth of knowledge does not as a rule inhere in the individual but has been divided up among a multitude of specialists. Anyone who sets out nowadays to create standards with a view to the rehabilitation of judgment will find that he will need to make a frontal attack on the doctrine of spontaneity, not indeed as incompatible with certain forms of creation, legitimate enough in their own place and degree, but as the basis for an adequate philosophy of life. The confusion of categories that results from the attempt to give to spontaneity a supreme and central place I have already indicated. Emerson imports this confusion into ethics when he avers in one of his more Rousseauistic moments that "our moral nature is vitiated by any interference of our will". Fichte extends the idea of ethical spontaneity to the whole body of Teutons. They have character, he says, without conscious effort on their part, being as they are an *Urvolk*, the elect of nature. The danger of thus encouraging mere expansiveness, whether in an individual or in a people, should by this time be manifest. The stormy emancipation that began in Goethe's youth, not merely from the traditional controls but from any limitations whatsoever, may perhaps be symbolized in the figure of Faust. According to Spengler, the Faustian man is now dying. It is high time he should die if civilization is to live—true civilization and not civilization in the very special sense that Spengler himself gives to the term.

Standards not only set limits to mere expansiveness but will be found to imply, so far as the temperamental man is concerned, the setting up of a model of some sort, in other words a revival of the principle of imitation. One may admit the possibility that some individual may, single-handed, achieve a sound synthesis and at the same time give it creative embodiment, let us say, in poetry. If we are to go by the experience of the past, however, we must conclude that important religious or humanistic art and literature require normally the support of a convention. If as a result of a vigorous critical movement a considerable number of persons not only got together as to the essentials of the good life, but insisted on making their agreement effective in education, they might be preparing the way for a very different type of creation from the two main types that have flourished for several generations past—the romantic and the so-called realistic. It has been proclaimed on various occasions in this country that it is time for us to give over following old-world patterns and to express our native genius. But the very notion of genius implied in this programme is itself a dubious borrowing from the old world. If we were really capable of virile initiative we should be bringing a searching scrutiny to bear on this whole notion of genius and its outcome in art and literature from the eighteenth century down. It is not likely that we should then be content, as we have been for the most part of recent years, to echo belatedly a decadent European naturalism.

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AFTER THE FALL

by Edwin Muir

What shape had I before the Fall?
  What hills and rivers did I seek?
What were my thoughts then? And of what
  Celestial happenings did I speak

To my companions? Did our eyes
  From some wide-opening mountain place
See Heaven and Earth in one, and range
  From bound to bound of Time and Space?

Did I see Chaos and the Word,
  The suppliant dust, the moving Hand,
Myself, the Many and the One,
  The changing and the unchanging Land?

That height cannot be scaled again.
  My fall was like the fall that burst
Old Lear's heart on the summer sward.
  Where I lie now I stood at first.

Yet the old pain returns anew:
  What was I ere I was a man?
What shape among the shapes that once
  Age-long through endless Eden ran?

The thousand worlds of sport and play
  Where my armorial comrades were
The low-browed voiceless animals:
  What sights and shapes did I see there?

Did I see there the dragon brood
  By streams their emerald scales unfold,

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While from their amber eyeballs flowed
  Soft-rayed the rich and rustling gold?

It may be that one time I walked
  By rivers where the dragon drinks;
But this side Eden's gate I meet,
  On every twisting road, the Sphinx,

Whose head is like a wooden prow.
  That forward leaning dizzily
Over the seas of whitened worlds
  Has passed and nothing found to see;

Whose breast, a flashing ploughshare, once
  Cut the rich furrows wrinkled in
Venusberg's sultry underworld,
  And ever trampled fields of sin;

Whose salt-white brow like crusted fire
  Smiles ever, whose cheeks are red as blood;
Whose dolphin back is flowered yet
  With wrack that foundered in the Flood.

Since then in antique attitudes
  I swing the bright two-handed sword,
And smite the marble smiling brow,
  Wide-eyed and watchful as a bird;

Smite hard between the basilisk eyes,
  And gash the snaky dolphin side,
Until the coils are cloven in two,
  And free the glittering pinions glide.

Like quicksilver the scales slip down,
  Up through the air the spirit flies,
And so I build me Heaven and Hell
  To buy my bartered Paradise.

While from a legendary height
  I watch a shadowy figure fall,
And not far off another beats
  With his bare hands on Eden's wall.

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JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

by L. A. G. Strong

SYNGE has now been dead long enough to allow even his own countrymen to approach his work without partisanship or apology. Though a mild man personally, and one who cared nothing for faction or politics, he was fated to arouse bitter antagonism and to achieve an unpopularity in his own country such as can never befall any artist for his art's sake alone. Yet he cared for nothing else; and his case shows once again that, while the public will forgive a man for attending only to what he thinks important, he must not ignore what is important to them.

Synge was born in 1871, of an old Wicklow family. By the end of the century he was in Paris, ill, very poor, doing hack work for various journals. He met Mr. W. B. Yeats, who in a happy moment urged him to return to Ireland, and seek inspiration there. It was at the time of the Irish literary renascence, when a number of cultured Irishmen were laboring to create a national art. Synge went to the Aran Islands. Almost at once he began to write with authority, and by 1903 he had entered upon the six years of creative life to which his fame is due.

In 1907 *The Playboy of the Western World* was attacked on the grounds that it libelled Ireland. Synge, who had written of life as he saw it, was bewildered and, for a time, despondent. His disease grew worse. At last he began to work upon a tragedy based on early Irish legend, but he died before he could finish it, thereby presenting literature with yet another riddle of unfulfilment. "Had he finished *Deirdre* as he intended," says Mr. Yeats, "we should have had a masterpiece." In his other work, however, Synge fulfilled himself sufficiently to make him one of the completest personalities in literary history; for his short creative life, when *Deirdre* is left out, was the development of a single phase from start to flower and conclusion. *Deirdre* was the beginning of another.

Here, having briefly outlined Synge's life, we come upon a difficulty. A paper of this kind, which aims at giving in a brief compass the essential quality of its subject, and affords no leisure for detailed examination, is open to one serious objection: that it cannot represent that subject as well as could a series of judiciously selected passages from his work. Yet such quotations, in the nature of things, must be cut down: leaving us with the uneasy knowledge that, whatever we may say, Synge himself could say much better.

For these reasons, this paper will chiefly aim at sending readers to Synge himself. It will attempt, not to "place" him with regard to other writers, but to indicate the enjoyment which his work affords. The classification game, and that activity known to its practitioners as "scientific" criticism, attractive and scholarly though they may be, tend

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sometimes to blind our eyes to literature's main benefit—enjoyment. The man who puts on rubber gloves before he handles an author's work, in order that his appraisal may be insulated from every touch of personal preference, will not be the best critic of such work as Synge's. Certain authors, like certain characters, need our sympathy before they can speak to us. To know their message, we must make them welcome, and we must listen. We can be as critical as we like—afterwards. The school of critics who sit aloof in an ivory tower, and haughtily summon such of the world's literature as will approach for judgment, is not going to make much of Synge. The loss will be theirs, not his. For the readers to whom literature is an essential part of life, all that really matters is what the author has to say to them, what pleasure he can give them, what influence he can have upon their secret life: and to receive this they need not become uncritical, or lose intelligence, but simply keep quiet till they have the data. They will not be the worse off. In the end, he judges best who has received the most.

We will not therefore attempt to "place" Synge with reference to other writers, nor quarrel with the "places" which have been allotted to him by other readers; but merely to supply as many reasons as possible for reading and enjoying his work.

The portraits and photographs of Synge show a swarthy man, with thick black hair and moustache, firm chin, and thoughtful eyes, set wide apart. He was shy, gentle, and readily interested; better at home in small companies than in large; loving to walk alone on the mountains and to talk with the country people. Mr. Yeats calls him "that enquiring man, John Synge", and relates that, once he forgot his self-consciousness, he could become impassioned upon any subject which deeply interested him. He told a stranger that he "was born in Dublin, but that he had travelled afterwards and had been in Paris and Rome, and seen the Pope Leo XIII". Elsewhere Mr. Yeats says of him "he was a solitary, undemonstrative man, never asking pity, nor complaining, nor seeking sympathy". And another friend, Mr. Masefield, "His mind was too busy with life to be busy with the affairs or the criticism of life".

Sir Walter Raleigh, when the Irish Players were making one of their first appearances in Oxford, went one night and stood at the back of the pit. There he saw a dark man watching his own play impassively, with folded arms. Some quality about the dark man vividly impressed his imagination, so that, whenever he remembered or related the incident, it seemed to have a significance which he could neither define nor effectively communicate.

Mr. Fred O'Donovan, the actor, tells how after one of his first appearances at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, he went up, after cleaning off his paint, to the foyer, where a large number of people were gathered. With his back to the mantel, Mr. Yeats addressed one knot of listeners; beneath the candelabra, Lady Gregory addressed another. In a corner, having slipped behind a hat-stand to avoid attention, was the third of the triumvirate, J. M. Synge.

He feared cities. On the Aran Islands he lived as one of the peasants, playing his fiddle in the evenings for them to dance. He knew every mile of the Wicklow Hills. During the last year of his life he became engaged to Miss Maire O'Neill, a leading actress in the Irish Players, and the first to play *Deirdre*. She went daily to sit with him in the nursing home until he died. For the account of his death we can turn to Mr. George Moore:

> He used to speak of *Deirdre* as his last disappointment; but another awaited him. An hour before he died he asked the nurse to wheel his bed into the room whence he could see the Wicklow Mountains, the hills where he used to go for long solitary walks, and he was wheeled into the room, but the mountains

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could not be seen from the windows; to see them it was necessary to stand up, and Synge could not stand or sit up in his bed, so his last wish remained ungratified, and he died with tears in his eyes.

The Notebooks, the first of Synge's work to which we turn, are a series of chapters which originally appeared as articles in magazines, describing life in the Aran Islands, in Wicklow, and West Kerry. To a great extent they are the storehouse from which the beginnings of the plays were drawn; but they stand perfectly by themselves, and show us their author more personally than do the plays. Synge had hitherto been attempting to see life subjectively, through himself, and the chaos of his unrealized personality obscured his view. On Aran, his gaze turned outward, he saw life objectively for the first time. He heard a thought with which he was familiar expressed in a speech he had only half forgotten, and with new richness: and the man who read only the masterpieces, whose work in Paris had lacked reality, being like a shadow thrown from mirror to mirror, or, as Mr. Yeats has said, "A child looking through a window which it blurs with its own breath", now saw the thought objectively, and could judge it.

To quote from *The Notebooks* is difficult, for the incidents related are seldom brief and isolated, and the descriptive passages, always an integral part of the texture, cannot be ripped from their context. A reader who wishes to savor their quality briefly is advised to read, in the first of the Aran Island books, the account of the eviction, and of the old woman's funeral. Here are a few lines from the latter:

> The morning had been beautifully fine, but as they lowered the coffin into the grave, thunder rumbled overhead and hailstones hissed among the bracken.
>
> In Inishmann one is forced to believe in a sympathy between man and nature, and at this moment, when the thunder sounded a death-peal of extraordinary grandeur above the voices of the women, I could see the faces near me stiff and drawn with emotion.
>
> When the coffin was in the grave, and the thunder had rolled away across the hills of Clare, the keen broke out again more passionately than before. . . . Before they covered the coffin an old man kneeled down by the grave and repeated a simple prayer for the dead.
>
> There was an irony in these words of atonement and Catholic belief spoken by voices that were still hoarse with the cries of pagan desperation.

In the Wicklow book, anyone who reads the account of Synge's meeting with the diseased man who had made a table of rushes will at once be sure whether he wishes to read further.

Synge's poetry has no startling intrinsic merit, yet it is of the utmost importance to the study of himself, and to other poets. Great as his influence has been upon the theatre, it may well be that as a poet he will best prove to have been the prophet of a new time. His verses were written at odd occasions over a period of twenty years, to please himself. He had strong theories on poetry in the abstract, and more definitely upon the particular function of poetry in his time: but apart from these theories his verse is a kind of diary, in which, freed from professional loyalties and restraints, he could ease his soul without fear of an audience. Thus, although he shows that he had command of a powerful technique when he chose,

> Seven dog-days we let pass
> Naming queens in Glenmacnass—

he wrote his verses as it were in his shirt-sleeves, when the day's work was over. Yet this work has influenced almost all his successors in Ireland, including Mr. Yeats, whose *Responsibilities* (1913) shows strongly the impress of his friend's mind. This influence upon the greater by the less is a commonplace of literature; but in this case it

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was not Synge's comparatively slender technique which was the cause, but his clear vision of the state of poetry and the measures needed for its cure. The few critical judgments he expressed in his maturity are as authoritative as any in the history of criticism.

The following passage from the preface to his poems expresses his view of the situation in 1908:

> The poetry of exaltation will be always the highest; but when men lose their poetic feeling for ordinary life, and cannot write poetry of ordinary things, their exalted poetry is likely to lose its strength of exaltation, in the way men cease to build beautiful churches when they have lost happiness in building shops.
>
> Many of the older poets, such as Villon and Herrick and Burns, used the whole of their personal life as their material, and the verse written in this way was read by strong men, and thieves, and deacons, not by little cliques only. Then, in the town writing of the eighteenth century, ordinary life was put into verse that was not poetry, and when poetry came back with Coleridge and Shelley, it went into verse that was not always human.
>
> In these days poetry is usually a flower of evil or good; but it is the timber of poetry that wears most surely, and there is no timber that has not strong roots among the clay and worms. . . . It may almost be said that before verse can be human again it must learn to be brutal.

The same view is expressed more compactly in the poems themselves:

> Adieu, sweet Angus, Maeve, and Fand,
> Ye plumed yet skinny Shee
> That poets played with hand-in-hand
> To learn their ecstasy.
>
> We'll stretch in Red Dan Sally's ditch,
> And drink in Tubber Fair,
> Or poach with Red Dan Philly's bitch
> The badger and the hare.

Of the poems which follow this preface, only a few are deliberately brutal: and these are the least convincing. What they do, the plays do better. Here is the end of one, "Danny", chosen because it exhibits several of Synge's characteristics:

> It wasn't long till Danny came,
> From Bangor making way,
> And he was damning moon and stars
> And whistling grand and gay.
>
> Till in a gap of hazel glen—
> And not a hare in sight—
> Out lepped the nine-and-twenty lads
> Along his left and right.
>
> Then Danny smashed the nose on Byrne,
> He split the lips on three,
> And bit across the right-hand thumb
> On one Red Shawn Magee.
>
> But seven tripped him up behind,
> And seven kicked before,
> And seven squeezed around his throat
> Till Danny kicked no more.
>
> Then some destroyed him with their heels,
> Some tramped him in the mud,
> Some stole his purse and timber pipe,
> And some washed off his blood.
>
> * * *
>
> And when you're walking out the way
> From Bangor to Belmullet,
> You'll see a flat cross on a stone,
> Where men choked Danny's gullet.

This is an interesting poem, even if it is not a good one, for a great deal of Synge's quality has gone into it. It would be hard in so small a compass to find the marks of so many allegiances. Notice first of all that ingrained sympathy with the poor which can only be felt by a man who has been poor himself.

"Some stole his purse and timber pipe"—that marvellous adjective comprehends a deep emotion. No one who has not lived among the poor, unless he remembers his childhood very clearly, can so feel in his bones the sacredness of few possessions, and

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the pathos of their dispersal even when a blackguard owned them; nor could any but a fine poet make one epithet express so much.

It is strange to find, beside this primitive emotion, echoes from Wordsworth and from Shelley. "Echoes" perhaps is not a fair word, and Shelley could hardly claim copyright in the device which Synge has here used after him. We had better call them evidence of reading. Consider, in the first place, the line

And not a hare in sight.

It would be interesting to take a census of the effects which this device produces in the minds of different readers. It seems such a two-edged weapon that there is little wonder it has been sparingly used. Does to deny a vivid attribute to our subject suggest the absence of that attribute? Or is the attribute so vivid in itself, that our minds are impressed with the picture of it, and the privative idea is thereby lost? When Shelley wrote of "foamless isles", does the graphic word so fill our senses with images of sound and sea, that we ignore or shirk the subsequent effort required to dissolve those images and arrive laboriously at a new one? When Synge says there was "not a hare in sight", do we not immediately see a hare? And did both poets intend this, or did they precisely intend that we should experience whatever emotion results from reluctantly blotting a sharp picture from our mind?

The Wordsworthian echo, which several ears have caught, sounds in three lines of the final verse. Wordsworth might cheerfully have owned them, but he would probably have much resented the last. Incidentally, this last line is almost impossible to say —a deliberate effect to describe the obstinate circumstance of Danny's end.

Here is another poem, where Synge's guard is down, and we see a picture which is difficult to forget. The lonely man, in a huge and lovely glen on a bright day, with the mountains around him and a river beneath, stands with his hand upon an oak. In the knowledge that he can have but few years to live, with fewer and fewer chances of revisiting the bright places, he speaks with a gentle irony to the tree which may one day make him a coffin board:

My arms are round you, and I lean
Against you, while the lark
Sings over us, and golden lights, and green
Shadows are on your bark.

There'll come a season when you'll stretch
Black boards to cover me:
Then in Mount Jerome I will lie, poor wretch,
With worms eternally.

Last comes a curse, as vivid as that roaring thing which James Stephens has translated from the Irish: the one which ends,

May she marry a ghost and bear him a kitten, and may
The high King of Glory permit her to get the mange.

Synge's curse runs like this:

Lord, confound this surly sister
Blight her brow with blotch and blister,
Cramp her larynx, lung, and liver,
In her guts a galling give her.

Let her live to earn her dinners
In Mountjoy with seedy sinners.
Lord, this judgment quickly bring,
And I'm your servant, J. M. Synge.

In the same book are Synge's "Translations", in which he has sought to find, in the rhythms and imagery of peasant speech, fit equivalents for pieces of Italian and French, which have pleased him. A great deal of nonsense has been talked about that speech. It is, and is not, Synge's invention exactly as the speech of Falstaff and the Nurse are, and are not, Shakespeare's invention. "All art", said Synge, in the preface to *The Playboy of the Western World* "is a collaboration." Thus he, and his Elizabethan predecessors, selected from the talk of their time such phrases as suited their purpose

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best. The language of Synge's plays is not the language of the peasants, inasmuch as no peasant talks consistently as Synge's characters talk: it is the language of the peasants, in that it contains no word or phrase a peasant did not actually use. Those who are troubled at the half-coincidence, arguing that because in some ways the speech is realistic it is unreal as a whole, are misled by the late naturalistic school of writing—"Ibsen and Zola", to quote Synge again, "writing of the realities of life in joyless and pallid words"—and deny to their contemporaries those rights over language which they applaud in playwrights of the past.

English as spoken in the wilder parts of Ireland gets its characteristic rhythms and inversions from its attempt to render literally Gaelic idiom. It is in this sense broken English. Listen to this, a translation from Villon:

> Mother of God that's Lady of the Heavens, take myself, the poor sinner, the way I'll be along with them that's chosen.
>
> Let you say to your own Son that He'd have a right to forgive my share of sins, when it's the like He's done, many's the day, with big and famous sinners. I'm a poor aged woman, was never at school, and is no scholar with letters, but I've seen pictures in the chapel with Paradise on one side, and harps and pipes in it, and the place on the other side, where sinners do be boiled in torment; the one gave me great joy, the other a great fright and scaring; let me have the good place, Mother of God, and it's in your faith I'll live always.
>
> It's yourself that bore Jesus, that has no end or death, and He the Lord Almighty, that took our weakness and gave Himself to sorrows, a young and gentle man. It's Himself is our Lord surely, and it's in that faith I'll live always.
>
> *Prayer of the Old Woman.*
> *(Villon's Mother.)*

This dialect has character, and, since the Irishman sounds his consonants, it is fine stuff to speak. Its powers of emphasis, the gain in speed and terseness which its ready omission of the relative pronoun gives it, and its knack of arresting the attention by the unwonted use and placing of words, were all assets to the dramatist. Moreover the peasant in Ireland, for a variety of reasons, has an extraordinarily rich vocabulary, which, coupled with the wildness of his fancy, helps the listener to phrases his imagination could never compass unaided.

After this brief introduction, we come to the main part of Synge's work—the plays. His choice of country life for his material, though inevitable, was not immediate, for he tried his hand on at least two complete plays before beginning the series which we know. His first was about a nun, and was said by those who read it to have been morbid and confused. The story of the second illustrates amusingly his ignorance of the world of affairs. The Irish national theatre was launched, and its directors approached all Irishmen of note to write for it. Synge was asked to write an historical play. He was doubtful, and disappeared for ten days into the country. At the end of this time he returned, bringing with him a scenario. The time was one of the many Irish rebellions, and the scene a cave. The characters were two women, one Catholic and the other Protestant, who had taken refuge for fear of amorous attentions from the soldiery who were roaming the country. They fall to talking theology, until finally the Catholic woman gets up and leaves the cave, declaring that she will rather risk the worst than stay and listen to such blasphemous opinions. Synge was much perplexed when the committee handed him back his scenario: he could not see that it was in any way unsuited to a Dublin audience. (It is interesting, in this connection, to remember that *John Bull's Other Island* was likewise rejected by the committee; though for different reasons.)

Synge then turned to country life and speech. Not only was the material ready, and the artist's theory bidding him accept it, but

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it was familiar to him from his childhood, and his return flung it into bold relief. He was at home, knowing more of the world than Ireland. Understanding of all he now saw was innate in him, and such understanding no powers of observation or mimicry can replace. Moreover, among these people he came back to a principle that schools and cities may well have hidden from him: a principle we find in Russian plays as well as Irish, and which in the past has often stood in the way of our understanding them.

In the society in which we live, one of the strongest unwritten principles, fostered chiefly in our schools, is that, before we speak, we must establish a right to speak. The mere fact of our existence in itself confers no right to speak. We must wait until, by some achievement, or by mere seniority in some branch of society, we have so far impressed public opinion as to be allowed the utterance of a point of view of our own.

Now among the country folk in Ireland, and apparently in Russia, this is not so. A person, the moment he enters a room, is by the mere fact of his existence entitled to his point of view; and his utterance of it is accorded as much consideration as the utterance of those who have long sat in the chimney corner. The result is in Ireland a readiness of personal sympathy which may not indeed spring from any reality of deep feeling, but is a part of the peasant's everyday manners, even as indiscriminate hospitality and charity are a part.

This was a great gain to Synge, by nature the most gentle, friendly, and personally tolerant of men: and with what ready response must he not have adopted a speech so deeply imbued with this sense of human kindness that one's possessions are habitually spoken of as one's "share" of the world's goods. "We have a good share of butter, thanks be to God." And even, in the first of the Villon translations, "forgive my share of sins". Thus, in Synge's case, all things worked together for good, and the man who suddenly saw this gold mine open before him was the man best qualified to work it.

Although there has been some argument as to the chronology of the plays, we have good reasons for supposing *The Shadow of the Glen* to be the first. This reveals Synge at once as certain of his touch and method; in fact, his handling is, maybe, surer in this play than in any other. It gives one immediate insight into his peculiar power and his achievement, so we may speak of them at once.

The outstanding quality of Synge's work is its intensity. The characters in his plays, during the short while they are before us, make the supreme gesture of their lives. They are their own epitome. All their past life, everything that has happened to them, but leads up to the time we see them, when in a few significant words and actions they reach their consummation. Now we know all about them; and there is no future action of theirs that will not be an echo of this action, or something we can easily foresee.

This intensity is reached more by habit of mind than by deliberate art of the pen. Spells of intellectual isolation among the peasantry and long vigils in the Wicklow Hills sharpened Synge's genius to that acuteness of perception which can grasp essentials immediately—which, in fact, sees nothing trivial to be weeded out. His conciseness is not attained by critical erasion: his characters think as quickly as he does.

The Shadow of the Glen is the perfect picture of a mood. Its hero is not man but nature. In a lonely cottage at the top of a long glen a young handsome woman is counting her money. On the bed lies the dead body of her elderly husband. A tramp knocks at the door, and is admitted, for rain is falling heavily. She tells him how her husband died, and of the lonely life she has led since she wed him, with no company but the mists of the glen. She begs the tramp to keep watch while she goes to tell the nearest neighbor what has happened.

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When she is gone, the sheet is lifted from the bed, and the corpse sits up. He was only "letting on" to be dead, he tells the terrified tramp: his wife is a bad woman, and he has determined to catch her. She has gone to no neighbor, but to her fancy man.

Sure enough, she returns, bringing with her a young shepherd. Sitting at the table, they talk of marriage. She is hard to please, she tells him; she took the old man not for delight but for safety. At this point the old man leaps up and bids her begone, and the tramp also:

"Let you go along with her, stranger, if it's raining itself, for it's too much talk ye have surely."

The tramp accepts the situation at once:

"We'll be going now, lady of the house," he says. "The rain is falling, but the air is kind, and maybe it'll be a grand morning, by the grace of God."

She is doubtful of the manner of life she will have with him under the hedges:

"But you've a fine bit of talk, stranger, and it's with yourself I'll go. *(Then she turns to her husband.)* You think it's a grand thing you're after doing with your letting on to be dead, but what is it at all? What way would a woman live in a lonesome place the like of this place, and she not making a talk with the men passing? And what way will yourself live from this day, with none to care you? What is it you'll have now but a black life, Daniel Burke: and it's not long, I'm telling you, till you'll be lying again under that sheet, and you dead surely."

She goes out; the man who has driven her out sits down with the man she was to marry, and they drink together.

The utter loneliness in which this play begins, and which closes in again before it ends, when those who a minute ago were bitter rivals drink for company, can only be felt fully when the play is acted by native players. Sir Walter Raleigh said once that this play was what Wordsworth had for a lifetime tried to do and failed. This was extreme, and he might not have cared to write it: but nowhere in modern literature is one nearer to wild nature.

Riders to the Sea is a Greek tragedy, and one of the strangest things about it is that, when it is perfectly acted, its preternatural intensity does not make it seem less real. Although on the smallest reflection we see that there has not been time for that to happen off the stage which is related on it, yet, so surely is the atmosphere of a resistless fate suggested that we accept and even anticipate such happenings. Synge makes credible an hour fuller, but in effect as short, as Faust's last hour; and in his play we anticipate the stroke of time, whereas in Marlowe's it surprises us.

Indeed, from its first words it is a play acted against time: time marked not by the slow ticking of a clock, but by the slow breathing of a woman, or the rise and fall of waves upon the rock; a steady, eternal rhythm, to which the actors move like puppets, or creatures in a dream. They are fated, but it is the elemental pulse of Nature that governs them.

Even stronger are its little touches of naked candor. Maurya, the old woman, when the last of her sons is dead, says:

They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the South. . . . I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening. . . . It's a great rest I'll have now, and it's time surely.

This, and the first cry of the bereaved parent in the Greek play, "I have none to feed me in mine age", are in the same key, and sound to us now a little strangely.

When the curtain rises, two young girls are examining clothes taken from a drowned man, to see if he is their brother. They identify him at last by the dropped stitches in a

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stocking. Despite this, and the rough weather, and the entreaties of his old mother, the last of the sons insists on crossing to the mainland upon business. He goes without his food, and the old woman, who in her agitation has forgotten to bless him, runs with it by a short cut to intercept him on the road. Soon she returns in terror, for she has seen the drowned son riding close behind him. Now her last son will go the way of his brothers. She gives herself over to grief. Nothing the girls can say will comfort her. Long ago, she tells them, she

> . . . seen two women, and three women, and four women coming in, and they crossing themselves and not saying a word. I looked out then, and there were men coming after them, and they holding a thing in the half of a red sail, and water dripping out of it—it was a dry day, Nora—and leaving a track to the door.

Hardly has she said it than it happens again, and men bring in the body of Bartley. He has been knocked from his horse, and drowned in the surf. All kneel down. The old woman recites the litany of her lost sons, spreads the clothes of Michael by Bartley's feet, and sprinkles them with holy water:

> Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of the Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied.

This remains one of the most effective one-act plays in literature. The effect of the old women's entry, immediately after Maurya's description of it, is like nothing else ever seen in the theatre. *Riders to the Sea* is in every sense a play written on the edge of the world.

One speech in it, utterly unstressed, gives the keynote of Synge's implicit irony. A priest has said "The Almighty won't leave her destitute with no son living". Maurya replies, "It's little the like of Him knows of the sea".

It is one touch among many, and in actual performance passes almost unnoticed. In any case, we do not need it to tell us that for these people there is but one almighty power —the Sea.

The Well of the Saints has been condemned as cynical; but a cynic would have written the first act only. Two blind and hideous beggars, man and wife, each believing the other to be beautiful, are healed of their blindness by a saint, and fight in the bitterness of disillusion. Slowly their sight fails them, and, blind once more, they reject the saint's offer of a second and permanent healing. Cruelty, tenderness, mockery, passions of every kind; the arrogance of beauty, the coarser arrogance of strength, the holiness of the saint, admirable in itself but folly here; the humor of a sly mind that in a moment turns to spite; all are together in a unity in which the writer seems to watch without censure or interference. As in all his work, Synge records, but never judges.

The Tinker's Wedding, an early play recast, is the slightest of Synge's plays, a comedy with little but merriment to touch the heart. A tinker's woman is smitten with a sudden desire for respectability and a wedding ring. The tinker and the old mother scorn this notion, which they properly regard as an outrage against convention and good conduct. She insists, however, and a bargain is struck with the priest. He will wed them for so much down and the rest of the price in kind; and so the tinker labors overnight at a couple of cans. While he is away, the old woman steals the cans and drinks the proceeds. The priest, arrived for the ceremony, denounces them as cheats, whereupon they give up all idea of marriage, insult him violently, and decamp.

There is feeling in the play, for the girl is disappointed, the old woman has moments of vision, and the priest is humiliated: but none really suffers. The disappointment is healed almost before the play is done, the visionary will lose her sorrows in a pint, and

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no one is left to remind the priest of a discomfiture he will speedily forget. It has life and laughter, but it is the least of Synge's plays.

His masterpiece, *The Playboy of the Western World*, has a remarkable history of anger and of riot. The plot, in brief, is this: Christy Mahon, a young and quiet man, is at last roused to hit his bullying father over the head and run away. He comes to an inn for shelter, and the curious people get from him the admission that he has "slain his da". They admire his daring, and sympathize with his plight. Finally the innkeeper engages him as potboy. He is a great success with all the girls of the place, particularly with Pegeen, the innkeeper's daughter; and all come from far and wide to hear the story of his deed. Then the father turns up, with a cut head, and gives him a beating. All now deride Christy, till, maddened, he turns on his father in real earnest, subdues him, and disappears driving the astonished man before him.

"Ten thousand blessings upon all that's here," he cries, "for ye've turned me a likely gaffer in the end of all, the way I'll go romancing through a romping lifetime from this hour till the dawning of the Judgment Day."

The play was attacked from the start as a slander upon the Irish race, and is still so attacked. To understand this, the Englishman who laughs when Shaw is rude to him must remember that in small countries national self-consciousness rūns very high. Just as the smallest unit always rouses the most violent patriotism, and a house match at a public school excites higher feelings than one in which the whole school is the unit, so the smaller nation is always seeing itself attacked or glorified as a whole. The results are detrimental to its sense of humor and prohibitive of free speech within its boundaries. This was one line of attack, therefore—that the play was unpatriotic and likely to reflect discredit on Ireland.

Unfortunately for Synge there was another. The touchy puritanism of Ireland twenty years ago was offended by anything outspoken on the subject of women. (A few years ago only, Mr. Lennox Robinson suffered grave political and social prejudice for a short story which in England would have excited no comment at all, being deprived of public positions and ostracized by a large section of society in Dublin, including the university authorities.)

News of the intended attack spread, and the night of the first production found a packed house. There is a happy story to the effect that Lady Gregory, one of the directors, had brought her nephew and a number of undergraduates from Trinity to offset the malcontents. The party dined so well that they either mistook their instructions, or else were shocked into forgetting them, for they seem to have precipitated the final riot. The play proceeded with merely verbal interruptions till the passage where Christy, refusing all substitutes for Pegeen, proclaims he would not look at "a draft of chosen females in their shifts itself". There the performance ended, and it was many a long day before *The Playboy* could get a quiet hearing in Ireland or America.

It is an amazing piece of work, and the widespread realization that in no play outside of Shakespeare was such richness of language and variety to be found, is responsible for the wilder things that have been said about Synge; things which he would have been the first to disown with a smile. Synge was a deep student of Shakespeare: *The Playboy* has a laughter and violence and overwhelming love of life which no other dramatist has recaptured since the Elizabethans; but there we may stop. Synge's was a narrow genius, which luckily found what it needed ready to its hand. It was given him to do the work for which he was best fitted, and the result was one play at least which has won recognition the whole world over, and is safe to live.

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There is a fine extravagance of language in this play. Here, condensed from the dialogue, is Christy's account of his deed:

Christy: We were digging spuds in his cold, sloping, stony, divil's patch of a field. . . . "You squinting idiot," says he, "let you walk down now and tell the priest you'll wed the Widow Casey in a score of days."

Widow Quin: And what kind was she?

Christy (WITH HORROR): A walking terror from beyond the hills, and she two score and five years, and two hundredweights and five pounds in the weighing-scales, with a limping leg on her, and a blinded eye, and she a woman of noted misbehaviour with the old and young. . . . "I won't wed her," says I, "when all know she did suckle me for six weeks when I came into the world, and she a hag this day with a tongue on her that has the crows and seabirds scattered, the way they wouldn't cast a shadow on her garden with the dread of her curse". . . . "She's too good for the likes of you," says he, "and go on now or I'll flatten you out like a crawling beast has passed under a dray." "You will not if I can help it," says I. "Go on," says he, "or I'll have the divil making garters of your limbs tonight." "You will not if I can help it," says I. . . . With that the sun came out between the cloud and the hill, and it shining green in my face. "God have mercy on your soul," says he, lifting a scythe. "Or on your own," says I, raising the loy. . . . He gave a drive with the scythe, and I gave a lep to the east. Then I turned around with my back to the north, and I hit a blow on the ridge of his skull, laid him stretched out, and he split to the knob of his gullet.

His father tells the Widow Quin how little use Christy has for girls:

If he seen a red petticoat coming swinging over the hill, he'd be off to hide in the sticks, and you'd see him shooting out his sheep's eyes between the little twigs and the leaves, and his two ears rising like a hare looking out through a gap. Girls, indeed!

Or drink:

And he a poor fellow would get drunk on the smell of a pint. He'd a queer rotten stomach, I'm telling you, and when I gave him three pulls from my pipe a while since, he was taken with contortions till I had to send him in the ass-cart to the females' nurse.

And here the publican blesses the union of Christy and his daughter:

It's the will of God, I'm thinking, that all should win an easy or a cruel end, and it's the will of God that all should rear up lengthy families for the nurture of the earth. What's a single man, I ask you, eating a bit in one house and drinking a sup in another, and he with no place of his own, like an old braying jackass strayed upon the rocks? (*To Christy*) It's many would be in dread to bring your like into their house for to end them, maybe, with a sudden end; but I'm a decent man of Ireland, and I liefer face the grave untimely and I seeing a score of grandsons growing up gallant little swearers by the name of God, than go peopling my bedside with puny weeds the like of what you'd breed, I'm thinking, out of Shaneen Keogh. A daring fellow is the jewel of the world, and a man did split his father's middle with a single clout should have the bravery of ten, so may God and Mary and St. Patrick bless you, and increase you from this mortal day.

The Playboy is the poet, the man of imagination. The world was too much with him. He got drunk on the smell of a pint. At last his nerves give way; he acts unconsciously, and runs. Soon he is dazed with the shock of realized action, and finds himself in the actual world of sinews and admiring women. Here, in bewildering fact, are the day-dreams and the night-dreams. He is a hero, therefore what he has done must be heroic. He is a real, breathing hero: he whom all used to mock. "Oh," he cries in his realization, "they're bloody liars in the naked parish where I was born a man." Full of exaltation, he wins all at the sports—only to be cast down by his father into what he was before. But—suddenly he sees it—he rose from that once, and can as easily rise again. He has come into his estate, and it is

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too late to reclaim him; so off goes the likely gaffer to conquer other worlds, leaving dismay behind him.

Last comes the tragedy Synge never finished. As it stands, it is little more than a lyric. He had intended to add to the love story of Deirdre and Naisi a strong underplot of the grotesque and supernatural, and so acutely did he feel this lack, that shortly before his death he bade his two friends add some such element to the play; but, as the only thing he could then suggest was some business concerning the character Owen and a knife, they thought it best after his death to leave his work untouched. As it stands, we have a rough version of two acts, and a finished third, containing scenes and speeches of deep beauty. "Every true tragedy," said Lady Gregory, "must be a joy to him who dies"; and Deirdre goes to her death, leaving behind an aged, baffled king, a nurse who has outlived her nursling, and the ruins of a palace smoking to the sky.

Synge, then, was a humane and lovable man, who from instinct, and because his time was short, concentrated upon what was essential, and left the apparatus to others. He solves no problems. An observer of life, he values the spectacle for no further purpose, loving a scene not because it typifies this and that, but because it has color and is alive. He distils the very essence of this abounding life, and records it in speech which fulfils his own requirements. "In a good play," he said, "every speech should be as fully flavored as a nut or apple." Again, "In countries where the imagination of the people, and the language they use, are rich and living, it is possible for a writer to be rich and copious in his words, and at the same time to give the reality, which is the root of all poetry, in a comprehensive and natural form".

Like most men whose health is uncertain, he delighted in the violence of life, and squeezed the utmost out of every savor. Pegeen, writing to a shop before her intended wedding, asks for "a pair of lace boots with lengthy heels on them and brassy eyes". All Synge's boots had to have brassy eyes, and every imagined meal deserved a relish. He was able to keep without affectation the gusto generally left behind in the nursery. Life is good, death is evil: yet better death than to live too long. "It's heartbreak to the wise that it's for a short space we have the same things only," Deirdre says. And later, "Death should be a poor, untidy thing, though it's a queen that dies". But when the measure of life has been lived well, then death comes in season.—

> I have put away sorrow like a shoe that is worn out and muddy, for it is I have had a life that will be envied by great companies. It was not by a low birth I made kings uneasy, and they sitting in the halls of Emain. . . . It is not a small thing to be rid of gray hairs and the loosening of the teeth. It was the choice of lives we had in the clear woods, and in the grave we're safe, surely.

"In the clear woods": there, and on the mountains, Synge's sight grew as clear as the air around him. From out of doors he came into the hot cottages, played his fiddle, saw, listened, and went back again. He wrote in the sun, but with one eye always on the shadow. He saw everything, hills and trees and stones, sheep on the highroads, spiders in the ditches, and loved them for being themselves. He had little concern for traditional moralities. In the world as he saw it, the splendid things, the light and passionate hearts went down inevitably to defeat: yet he is an optimist, for he turns his face towards goodness and mercy. Finally, Nature is the solvent of human difficulties. In this transitory life, she is the only guide.

"The rain is falling, but the air is kind: and maybe it'll be a grand morning, by the grace of God."

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ARE AUTHORS HUMAN BEINGS?

by J. B. Priestley

HARDLY, I think. But first let us clear the ground a little. What do we mean by "authors"? Well, I mean good authors. Most authors are not good authors, just as most actors are not good actors and most doctors are not good doctors. We are writing about this real world and not about some distant paradise. Now it is no use bothering about bad authors, simply because the root of the matter is not in them; the essence of authorship is not there, or they would not be bad authors. A bad author is too much of an ordinary human being and not enough of an author, and that is why bad authors are so much nicer to meet than good ones.

But what do we mean by "human beings"? This is rather tricky. I do not think the old definitions will help us much here. For example, if you say "Man is the animal that laughs and cooks its food", you discover at once that authors are ruled out, for hardly any authors (good ones, of course) ever cook their food, and the few who do cook their own food never, never laugh. Then again, if you say "Man is the only animal that eats when he is not hungry, drinks when he is not thirsty, and makes love at all seasons", this lets the authors in immediately, for undoubtedly authors eat, drink and make love in this particular greedy fashion. Thus, you see, one old definition shuts authors out and the other brings them in. We shall not have to trouble about definitions. We shall have to rely on common sense. After all, we all know what human beings are, having lived with them all our lives. Let us leave it at that.

That most authors begin as fairly recognizable human beings, I have no doubt. I know I did myself. I will admit, too, that it is impossible to indicate any particular moment in an author's life and to say "After that, he ceased to be a human being". The process is gradual, but it is none the less sure. Looking back over the last ten years, I cannot see any trace of a quick change anywhere in my life, yet there it is—I began those ten years as an excellent specimen of a young wholesome human being, and I end them as a—but I must not go too fast.

The trouble about authors is that they extend themselves up and down but miss the common level of humanity. They become sub-human and superhuman. They are like fleas, toads and apes one minute, and then the next minute they are like gods. I do not propose to say a great deal about their sub-human behavior, their flea-like, toad-like and ape-like conduct, for, after all, a man must show some loyalty to his profession. But when you consider the envy, the jealousy, the peevish vanity, the monstrous conceit, the wild antics of authors, you can hardly ask yourself "Are these creatures men and women?" and find an affirmative answer. If you feel that you have not had sufficient experience, then catch a publisher and take him into a corner and say to him "What about authors?" When authors are men-

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tioned, publishers do not know whether to laugh or cry. You must have noticed that bewildered look which most publishers wear. They wear it even during lunch—and publishers do themselves very well at lunch. They wear that bewildered look because they have had so much to do with authors. Many a publisher has told me what a jolly business publishing would be if it were not for the authors. That is why the only fat contented publishers you see are always in the educational and reprint line of business. All their authors are dead.

Let us leave this revolting sub-human aspect of authorship and arrive with all speed at the other, the superhuman and godlike. In what respect does an author resemble a god? In this: that they are both observers of ordinary human life. They do not live this life, they observe it and report upon it. What is life to you is merely so much possible raw material for an author. He is never really on the stage of life but always sitting staring in the stalls. He can no more help observing than a good actor can help acting.

Not long ago, a very clever and popular actress, for whose art I have a sincere admiration, paid us a visit. I observed her with melancholy sympathy. She was acting all the time. She could not help it. She did not really pay us a visit; she gave us a free performance. What we were treated to was: Scene One, Actress arriving at house of author; Scene Two, Actress greeting everybody at house of author; Scene Three, Actress lunching; Scene Four, Actress discussing her new part; Scene Five, Actress greeting children of host and hostess; and so forth. It was grand. I wish I could have acted back at her, and made my voice and actions larger than life just as she did hers. But then that is not my business, and, after all, it is not for me to grumble, because just as she was busy acting, so, too, I was busy taking mental notes. I was as bad as she was. Nay, I was worse, because she at least did provide a free entertainment.

To imagine, as some people seem to do, that it is enjoyable being an observer of life is simply idiocy. They cannot have tried it. Once you become an observer of life, you are removed from all its pleasures. You cease to live and merely attend a twenty-four hour daily performance of an all-colored supertalkie. There is a difference, you will admit, between watching a picture of Miss Jujube Rosilips, the film star, being kissed, and taking Miss Rosilips out under the Californian night sky and kissing her yourself. (Which is preferable, of course, depends on your opinion of the lady.) There is practically the same difference between being an ordinary sensible human creature, up to the neck in real life, and being an author, busy all the time merely observing life.

If an author only observed other people, it would not matter very much. He would only be a sort of detective. But an author has to do what no detective has to do—he has to observe himself. He cannot help it. He is his own chief character. Other people are useful to him, no doubt, but he is still more useful to himself, for he is always at home to himself and there is always something going on to be watched and noted. And that's where the mischief's done. There are two of him, a shallow surface fellow who shaves and dresses and eats and drinks and travels and talks and makes love, and a deep fellow who sits in the dark just behind, watching all the time. The first one, who does things, cannot enjoy anything properly because he knows the other fellow is watching him, and the other fellow cannot enjoy himself properly because he is not living but merely observing. If you think this is fun, you must be crazy.

The only way to be happy (and this is the grand secret and I give it away freely with this article) is to forget yourself, to lose self-consciousness, to be whole-hearted and whole-minded, to be all of a piece. Watch a child at play, a young man in love marching up to his girl, a mother fussing with her first baby, a good craftsman hard at work, and

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you get a glimpse of human happiness. I do not say that authors do not know what happiness is. Even they have their moments. But these moments only arrive when they are writing like mad and consider they are doing a good job of work. On the other hand, real human beings are not restricted in this fashion; they can be happy in fifty different ways at fifty different times. But not authors, who cannot forget themselves, cannot be all of a piece, since they have divided themselves into two. An author does not fall in love, get married, travel or meet his friends. All he does is to watch himself falling in love, getting married, travelling or meeting his friends. That is why, when a number of authors all meet together, the result is frightful. There are so many of them there. That is why literary parties are so formidable, for there are two of every guest and everybody is observing himself or herself and everybody else, and the very wallpaper feels the strain. The only parties that are worse are theatrical parties, where you may get a whole roomful of people all acting and doing a turn at the same time.

Then, think of the hours we put in. Doctors and schoolmasters and successful lawyers imagine that they work very hard, and so no doubt they do, but compared with authors, they are mere idlers. You see, an author *never* stops. He may stop writing, but writing is only a small part of an author's life, and most of the work has been done before he sits down at a desk. No genuine author ever took a holiday. He would not know how to begin. Business men, when they have been overworking, are told by their doctors "to drop everything and try a long sea voyage". An author cannot drop everything and if he goes on a sea voyage he works so hard that, after about five days, he wants to start a book about it. I wake up in the middle of the night and find to my horror that I am still at work. It is horrible. It is inhuman. But then, authors are not human beings.

I have seen authors at funerals and memorial services, and they have worn dark clothes and long faces and looked all right, but I have known very well that most of them were not really sorrowing at all, they were busy taking notes. Some of them cannot even die decently themselves, they must examine their sensations and dictate accounts of them, as Proust is said to have done. If I were a woman, I would have nothing to do with authors, except as entertainers in print. If any feminine reader of this article is thinking of accepting the hand and heart of an author, let her be advised. She will never get whole-hearted attention from him. Even when he is kissing her, he will be trying to decide the exact flavor and making note of an adjective or two. Having observed her very systematically and acutely for a year or so, he will then decide that he has nothing more to learn from her and will hardly notice her existence. No, if you must marry, do it with a real human being. I suggest a business man. If I were a woman, I should always marry business men. If I were a marriage-broker (and if writing fails me, marriage-broking would be a capital alternative), I should do a lot of work among business men; and you would not find a single author —male or female—on my books.

Many people, who do not know me, imagine that I am happy. "What a joy it must be—!" they write, in their rather ridiculous letters. People who really know me have no illusions about my happiness. They are well aware of the fact that I am a miserable creature. I ought to be happy. My family life is very jolly; my health is reasonably good; I make enough money to live comfortably; I have a good many friends; and I have still a considerable capacity for enjoyment, whether it is the enjoyment of books, music, theatres, games or travel. If I were a sensible human being—the director of a transport company, a solicitor, a bank manager, a merchant, an engineer—I should be happy enough. But for the last ten years I have been engaged in

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this absurd task of earning a living by setting words down, and it has played the devil with me. Sensible plain humanity has vanished.

Just consider how monstrous my life is. For days together, perhaps, I will be miserable or angry, quite cut off from the pleasures of this life. All the other persons in the house will know about it. They will realize that I am almost unapproachable. I will go pacing my study floor, banging my hands together like an idiot, filling pipes and then forgetting about them, taking up books and then throwing them down again, snarling down the telephone, and, in short, behaving like a rather dreary lunatic. And why? What is the reason for all this fuss, this misery? Probably because I am in the middle of a novel and have suddenly got "stuck". Could anything be sillier than that? Because I cannot continue, for the time being, my history of the joys and sorrows and various activities and antics and conversation of quite imaginary persons, shadows of shadows, creatures less substantial than the people in a dream, therefore I behave in this ridiculous fashion. People have been taken away and put behind bars for less.

The fleeting joys of authorship are just as bad, being not an inch nearer solid sensible humanity. You meet an author and for once his face is alight, his eyes are shining, his voice is loud with welcoming companionship. "What is the matter with you?" you ask, with reasonable suspicion. It seems that he has just finished some important chapter in his new story. He has killed the old uncle off; he has artfully contrived the mother's jealousy; he has got the young lovers to Italy; or some such piece of nonsense. It is all something and nothing. The old uncle, the jealous mother, the young lovers, what are they but mere wisps of day-dream? Yet he has been bothering his head about them for weeks and weeks, perhaps months, and now is suddenly radiant because he has brought them through some crisis that he has invented for them. The great baby!

Having made out a strong case for the inhumanity, sub-humanity, and super-inhumanity of authors, I now propose to point out that most of them are really ordinary human beings, after all. The fact is, authors begin to be human beings just at the point at which most people imagine they stop being human. Readers have a trick—and it does them credit—of idealizing their favorite authors. But this will not do. I am going to give the game away.

Authors in their books are very plausible persons. They have to be: it's their trade. Reading these books, ordinary pleasant readers jump to the conclusion that their authors have a great deal of sense, far more sense than people who are not authors. They are entirely mistaken. Authors have not more sense than ordinary people. If anything, they have less. They talk a great deal of nonsense. They are always doing very silly things. Many of them are quite incapable of looking after their own interests and are too conceited to admit their ignorance and lack of ability. The only reason why they deceive the reader is that, when they write, they are most artfully plausible.

Because authors are always writing about the opposite sex and love and marriage, many simpletons think that authors are really wise about these things. They are not. It is all a fake. And the more they pretend to knowledge of such matters in their work, the worse they actually are in real life. There are some women novelists who seem to be so shrewd and penetrating and witty about men in their books that they frighten you, if you are a reader and a man. Nothing, you feel, could be hidden from these terrible intelligences. But these same women novelists, in real life, are if anything less worldly wise about men than ordinary women are. They are about on the level of sentimental governesses or cooks. They are capable of falling in love with and marrying the most frantically unsuitable men, who are bound to make them unhappy in less than no time. I have

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watched them doing it. It is the same with our sex. For sheer idiocy about women, give me those authors who pretend to be authorities on the subject. I know two or three members of my profession who have passed for years as masters of feminine psychology and the rest of it, and who in actual life have made a howling mess of it every time they have had anything to do with a real woman. They know less about the sex, and handle it worse, than the nearest postman or milkman. A truthful account of their private lives would be a terrible revelation, calling their bluff once and for all. Masters of feminine psychology indeed! Any shop-walker could teach them more about women in an hour than they have learned in twenty years.

We are supposed to be amazingly keen judges of character, simply because we are very clever about the creatures we invent. Actually, authors are taken in by people right and left. There is a special class of cheap swindlers who do nothing but trade on literary men's ignorance of character. They specialize, these fellows, in authors, who are considered easy game. I have been humbugged for years by tearful men who come into my study, tell me a lying tale about unemployment and prison and the Lord knows what, and then borrow the fare to Southampton or Manchester. Every time I am taken in I swear I will never be taken in again, but I always am. Why? Because I am really no judge of character. An ordinary business man would boot these fellows out on sight. They would never have the audacity to try these tales on anybody but authors. And don't conclude that I am sillier than my colleagues. I am not. We are all taken in, steadily, time after time. We are all so busy being very shrewd and clever about people on paper that we have not time to learn what a cheap swindler looks like. Here we are human enough.

By the way, all this is in strict confidence. There might be trouble if it got about.

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GLENWAY WESCOTT: LEGEND-MAKER

by Dayton Kohler

GLENWAY WESCOTT, at the age of thirty-one, has published a volume of poems (privately printed), two novels, a collection of short stories, and one brief tale which he prefers to call a melancholy fantasy upon Western themes; and the high distinction of his talent assures his place in the front rank of younger American writers. His books do not bulk large upon a library shelf. There is about them, however, an air of definite achievement, for they chart the development of an intelligent attitude toward American life and the Middle Western scene.

The Babe's Bed which has just been published by Harrison of Paris, presents a footnote to that literary philosophy which gives meaning and value to Mr. Wescott's work. The fantasy is a simple one. Although the calculated vagueness of his method grows somewhat overmannered, readers of his earlier books will not need the verse quoted from Richard Crashaw to recognize in the young and untrained child, fretful in its demands upon life, a symbol of the American spirit. Here is no lusty Pantagruel bred from the loins of a mightly Gargantua, but a sensitive stubborn spirit with a darkly enigmatic face, born in pioneer marches across western plains, on isolated farms and in rural schoolhouses: a poet's evocation of a people and a place. This is the child which must be disciplined for its own good in a household of older relatives divided and wearied by the passions of living.

In an age of uncertain values men and women have learned to conceal poverty under an extravagant system of spending and credit and to hide their grievances and fears by illusions which rise like the lovely, perverted flowers of some Eastern legend from a personal despair. Occasional ecstasy becomes evidence of inherent greatness. But sometimes the optimistic system fails. Then one sees beneath outward display and pompous ambitions the haunted intimacy of restricted lives. In this atmosphere of turmoil the babe sleeps fitfully.

Again and again Wescott insists that the land west of the Alleghenies was peopled by a poverty-stricken, disappointed race that had failed to realize a dream of riches upon the eastern seaboard. Many were fleeing from debt. Forests and rivers blocked their progress, but they possessed a grim, tight-lipped determination to go on. They were men boasting openly of their visions but doubting them in secret. A continent lay open to their reach, a twilight world yielding itself reluctantly to men obstinate with their own bitterness and pride. There was strength in them but not the charity of strength, for their God was a stern God of poverty who would provide wealth if they could keep a fierce idealism in their hearts. Then the dream faded; the men who had conquered

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the prairies and the forests knew that they would always be poor. Cities and factories arose; a few found riches. The rest inherited a land of orchards and grain fields and small towns masking its barrenness behind the appearance of prosperity, a seemingly fertile land made sterile by parching droughts in summer and lashed by blizzards in winter. No native arts flourished; poetry was the lugubrious singing of Swedish harvest hands in the wheat fields. Some went farther westward, others turned back toward the east. Peasant immigrants came. The pioneers had subdued a land which their children could not hold. Those who stayed, trained in the petty frugalities of hard times, accepted a hopeful optimism sustained with difficulty by a system of temporary values and small economies.

The Wisconsin of Glenway Wescott is more than a geographical region with natural boundaries of hills and rivers, a landscape of highways and farms. He sees it also as a symbol of narrowness because the old pioneer spirit has dwindled to the restlessness of discontent. This relationship of an artist to his material is shown with clarity in the introductory essay to his volume of short stories *Goodbye Wisconsin:*

"The country, there it lies, a fitful and mysterious source—nothing more. The source of the sunrises, the bad weather, and the food, and of certain books already a little out of date. Wisconsin farmers are no longer rustics; they have become provincials. The former ardent, hungry, tongue-tied life with its mingling of Greek tragedy and idyll has come to an end. Labor for the men, labor-pains for the women, elementary passions like gusts of storm moving unembarrassed in empty hearts, strong minds empty from birth until death of everything but the images of fowls in the rain, lonesome barns in the yellow sunshine—all over and done with. Now, by telephones, the radio, and automobiles, the farms have turned into a spacious, uncrystallized suburb around towns like Clarion; and between the town and suburb the contact is close."

Wescott seems to write while remembering, his mind filled with images of places and people seen but half-forgotten, stories heard long ago and recalled in tranquil recollection. Because other lives have touched his remotely or by hearsay, he must explore the past to find the clue to an understanding of the present. He saw the late twilight of the pioneering epoch and he has watched with moving, troubled gaze the effects of those factors that are transforming rural Wisconsin into an urban landscape. He writes as one who turns back along a familiar road to survey a scene changed unaccountably since youth. He is always the observer, watching, remembering, attempting to explain the implications of a national birthright.

In *The Apple of the Eye*, published in 1924, Dan Strane is the protagonist before whose eyes drama unfolds. A delicate, imaginative boy of fifteen, he is baffled and perplexed by his first dim realization of life. Mr. Wescott cuts his novel in two parts to tell the story of Hannah Madoc, a lonely coarse old woman whose grim charities transform her at death into a humble country saint. The story of Bad Han becomes a dark and tragic background for Dan's patient striving to understand the secret bonds between many lives. More by intuition than by actual knowledge, he shares the brief ecstasies, loneliness, brutality and gaunt despair of those about him. But when the time comes for his own pilgrimage into life, these tortured, shadowy figures of his awakening adolescence have faded to remote images of an experience timeless and universal.

The Grandmothers is another detailed exploration into the past. Alwyn Tower is the sensitive, bewildered boy of *The Apple of the Eye* grown to early manhood, an expatriate living in a town in southern France. One night in retrospective mood he turns back toward America, and there he sees, in a region of dead and distant relatives, those

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generations of ghosts who in life had embodied his own hopes and prejudices and fears. These men and women had answered the old problem with a new riddle for which he can find no solution; he only knows that the composite spirit of a race exists somewhere in this confused tangle of incomprehensibly triumphant, starved or thwarted lives. His own heritage has come from these dim persons of the past: his grandmother Tower, the matriarch of a proud and stubborn clan; his great-uncle Leander, the bachelor; Mary Harris, the adventuress; his uncle Jim, with a meek talent for obedience; Evan Tower, the deserted, and others. And linking these lives are the stories that must be pieced together carefully, like a puzzle —from a gesture half-forgotten, snatches of casual gossip or an obscure allusion, a remembered face, family keepsakes, a faded daguerreotype. His method is reminiscent of Proust, but out of these fragmentary materials the writer builds up a vivid and compelling narrative of American life. His family history becomes a midland saga, a humble epic of endless striving in circumstances removed from the mere heroic.

In *Goodbye Wisconsin* Wescott speaks for the first time in his own person, a wanderer returned to brood over a spectacle of change. Few volumes of deliberate criticism have produced a more comprehensive interpretation of the Middle West than that contained in the essay prefacing a group of short stories that touch the regional scene at every point of contact. "A Guilty Woman", "Like a Lover" and "The Wedding March" are vicarious annotations upon themes of passion. "Adolescence" is the poetry of awakening perceptions. The symbols of a grim theology stir the hero of "The Dove Came Down". A mood trembles upon the verge of dark terror in "In A Thicket". "Prohibition" is legendary portrayal of the village drunkard. "The Runaways", "The Sailor" and "The Whistling Swan" comment on the dubious fates of those who would fly to remote utopias.

The young man in *The Babe's Bed* is of course Wescott, at least in attitude and quality of vision. He has returned to the Middle West for a holiday in a household consisting of his parents, a young unmarried sister, another sister, her husband, and their child. When all conventional attitudes of these patient lives are swept away in the depressing heat of midsummer, strong underlying emotions of sympathy and affection and scorn reveal a more subtle drama of humble griefs and pride. In this domestic crisis the young man loses all sense of independent personality, finding his identity confused with one vast manifestation of the same spirit—"all the sensitive, brutal and tragic men, all women fumbling in the spell of love as best they could, and all the children". He alone perceives that before the blank face of destiny all humanity becomes a part of that unfledged spirit which weaves back and forth between the past and the future, between the impotence of the old and the untried abilities of the young.

Art can only vary the timeless themes of love and ceaseless striving, endurance and the fear of death. In dealing with the simple emotions of patient and inarticulate lives, Wescott is writing the folk legends of a midland country too youthful and unsettled for classic design. His art is the portrayal of unformed things in a wide, brooding land where life moves blunderingly and with uncertain temper toward racial completeness. For this, after all, is the true American scene, this picture of a half-assimilated race taking root in a new soil. While we watch and form hasty judgments the process goes on. The men and women of Wescott's stories demonstrate an art within an art; they hold the significance and unconscious symbolism of racial myths. A wise old grandmother answering the questions of an eager, curious boy, Leander Tower alone at night in his garden, two boys talking of life and love in a country graveyard, the village drunkard drinking whisky from a spoon, a young man watching

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the candid spectacle of death—these figures reveal humanity posed in momentary attitudes when life becomes understandable. It is this fidelity to experience in his work that conveys a sense of mysterious and impersonal forces moving obscurely beneath the surface. There is a vast and sometimes contradictory quality about these people, as in the story of Bad Han, whose life and death trace the growth of homely country legend. Each life moves against a pictorial background dimly realized by short passages of description in which landscape becomes the appropriate setting for an action or a mood, atmosphere of natural magic for some too-earthly epic.

Wescott writes with the simplicity of rhythm that we find in folk poetry and folk tunes, and his beautifully cadenced prose is an esthetic medium to bring a sense and smell of the soil like some dark intoxicant to the imagination of the reader. He is essentially a writer of short stories, with a knowledge of the inner spirit and a subtle power of interpreting life as a drama of human motives and desires. When he fails—as he does in at least two of the short stories and in several episodes of *The Grandmothers*—it is because the arrangement of primitive feeling and mental subtlety by which he attempts to synthesize external action and inner psychology has failed to come off.

"Wisconsin" remains a heritage from which he cannot escape; a deep loyalty of the blood more powerful than his reasoning protests against a hostile environment, an ability to see in meagre and monotonous lives a depth of life that has experienced much in conflict with the reluctant soil. This inanimate contact with a vaguely possessive spirit has determined his viewpoint and his philosophy. Even when he carries his characters to remote scenes a bright impressionism broods over his pages, a regional ghost dominating the present from the darkness of the past.

Glenway Wescott is young; his art is still in process of development. But he speaks with the voice of authority in his humane representation of Middle Western life, seeing hidden promise and loveliness where others find only the confusion of false hopes and spiritual poverty. He is not so much interested in a criticism of that life as in its interpretation. To him the midland remains a wilderness still, a young land deluded and turbulent, waiting its turn to attain dignity and greatness.

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HER MAJESTY'S JESTERS

by John Macy

THE king's fool of old influenced the fate of nations by his practical wisdom or by his ability to laugh the monarch into a good frame of mind. In Victoria's sober court there was no such left-hand prime minister in cap and bells. Democracy had robbed the ruler of picturesque and amusing accessories, and the good lady, by all accounts, was not accessible to humor; of her statesmen only Disraeli had the ability and the boldness to turn a light phrase in her presence. The days were long past when royalty not only permitted but encouraged wit, when courtiers exchanged banter with Elizabeth or Charles II. The king's fool, like some other perquisites and prerogatives, had passed from the palace to the market-place; the private servant had become a public servant. The Victorian clowns, however democratic, were respectful to royalty, and of course they were discreetly courteous to the first lady of the land. There may have been a slight laugh at her tremendous respectability in the famous contrast between Cleopatra and the "'ome life of our own dear queen". With all their faults, the jesters love their Queen, though in saying so of his pirates Gilbert is mildly derisive of loyalty to royalty. Hearing Gilbert and Sullivan opera (if she ever did) Victoria might have said, "We are not amused", but she would have found no hint of lese-majesty directed at the sovereign. The injured majesty was, as the word meant in civil law, that of "the sovereign people". Englishmen of all classes from coster to peer were the butts of the merry andrews and were also their patrons and protectors. English humor was the most democratic thing in England. Those who made it were almost all working journalists and draftsmen, members of the very middle class which was its favorite target; indeed the triumphant bourgeois were in command of all enterprises, grave or gay, and despite the lingering power of aristocracy and the advancing power of radical democracy, almost everything worth doing for the last hundred years has been done by members of the middle class.

Because the buffoons and lampooners understood all sorts and conditions of men, the Victorians themselves treated with great skill and complete comprehension all the vices and follies and stupidities that have been charged against them by their critical and irreverent successors. In ridiculing them we are a little behindhand, because they did it first. No period in English literature or, I dare say, in any other literature can show such variety and abundance of laughter. Life in Merry England may not have been so merry as it was supposed to have been at some vague early time; many Victorians thought so and were gloomy about it. But humorous literature had never been so merry; not in the witty eighteenth century, not in the golden age of Elizabeth. Perhaps Englishmen had to laugh to dispel the gloom and relieve their earnest sobriety. But laugh they did, with all kinds of

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laughter from scornful satire to delightful inanity. The Englishman was not afraid to be silly. He had so much dignity that he could afford to lose it when he felt like cutting capers and revelling in nonsense. Reputed to be reticent and decorous, he gave himself away and mocked at himself with amiable candor. The greatest compendium of English wisdom and foolishness is *Punch*, from the first number to the latest. Not all Victorian humorists contributed to *Punch*, but many Victorian men of letters who were more than humorists, like Thackeray and Hood, were of the jolly and distinguished company that sat at Mr. Punch's board. And the total content of *Punch* is a history of the Victorian age—and ours.

In continuity and consistency *Punch* is as solid as any British institution—as the Bank of England or the British Museum. Editors changed, times changed; there was diversity, perversity of expression by staff members and casual contributors. But the essential character and policy of *Punch* seem to have been laid down at the start by Mark Lemon and his associates and have been adhered to by their successors with fidelity and ever-fresh renewal. The uniformity of *Punch* in its physical make-up corresponds to a uniformity of mind which just escapes monotony. There is even a *Punch* style of drawing, no matter who the artist or what the subject. This is not to say that the various artists, some of them excellent draftsmen, lacked individuality, imitated each other, or belonged to the same school. But they have a mutual resemblance which is not merely British, because it is distinct, though not definably so, from the general family resemblance of other English periodicals. It may be that the reason for the similarity between English humorous drawings from one generation to another is that the subjects are much alike, whether they be common types or eminent statesmen in cartoons, and English draftsmen are literal in portraying types or individuals. Max Beerbohm, the greatest authority on this matter in word and picture, says that the English lack the gift of caricature, which is exaggeration for its own sake. The political cartoons in *Punch* are faithful attempts at likenesses and are seldom funny. Something in the neighboring text may be hilariously absurd and grotesque. The pictures, especially the cartoons, are fixed and rigid as if the subjects had sat for their photographs; they achieve a perpetual lack of motion. Even Tenniel's famous cartoon of the Kaiser and Bismarck, "Dropping the Pilot", is frozen. *Punch's* cartoons are generally severe in form if not in meaning, and sometimes they are hard in both senses. In domestic affairs the prevailing attitude is Whig-Liberal. The hook-nosed puppet is confident of his ability to instruct the government, and many of his spokesmen have been competent critics. In international relations Mr. Punch's England has been everlastingly right, even when she was everlastingly wrong. It is a British habit of mind, though not peculiar to England among the nations of the earth or to *Punch* among authoritative journals. In one great moment of history *Punch* was wrong and confessed it with belated fairness. Like Mr. Gladstone and the majority of English officialdom, *Punch* took the side of the South in our Civil War. The cartoons of Lincoln were harsh and crude. When Lincoln was killed, *Punch* published Tenniel's dignified mortuary emblem with Tom Taylor's poem, of which two stanzas run:

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier!
You, who with mocking pencil wont to trace,
Proud for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face.

Beside the corpse, that bears for winding-sheet
The stars and stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at the head and feet,
Say, scurrile jester, is there room for *you*?

In serious verse Mr. Punch more than once touched the heights. It is greatly to his credit that he published Hood's "Song of the Shirt" after other periodicals had rejected it. Punch

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[*By Charles Keene.*]

THRIFT

Peebles Body (to Townsman who was supposed to be in London on a visit). "E—EH, MAC! YE'RE SUNE HAME AGAIN!"

MAC. "E—EH, IT'S JUST A RUINOUS PLACE, THAT! MUN, A HAD NA'BEEN THE-ERRE ABUNE TWA HOOURS WHEN—BANG—WENT SAXPENCE!!!

From "Punch", December 5, 1868.

has always been on the side of good causes and humanitarian reforms at home. Like Dickens and other generous Victorians he spoke both bitter and good-natured words for the under dog. But like his contemporaries the little hunchback was always respectable and did not allow his radicalism to be too violent. One would as soon expect *The Times* to go Bolshevik. Mr. Punch is an English gentleman and he does not quite live down to his subtitle, *Charivari,* which his neighbor, *The Oxford Dictionary,* defines as a "hubbub; a serenade of pans, trays, &c., to unpopular persons". *Punch* is no such discordant riot, but an orderly well-conducted medley in which fine voices and shimmering wit mingle with not indecorous guffaws.

The jokes of *Punch* are doubly funny, intentional and unintentional, to be laughed both with and at. Instead of snapping to the point of a joke, as seems to be the habit of French and American comic journals (and even of *Simplicissimus* and *Fliegende Blätter*), *Punch* gives a one-act play under a picture, with complete stage-directions, the present condition and past history of the characters, all involved, for the sake of emphasis and clarity, in a maze of typographical variations, italic, small cap, large cap, italic small cap, italic large cap, double quote, single quote, parenthesis, asterisk. (Will my printer use everything there is on the linotype and see if he can set this? It will not ruin the joke if he gets the fonts wrong.)

Indignant Anglo-Saxon (to Provincial French Innkeeper, who is bowing his thanks for the final settlement of his exorbitant and much-disputed account): "OH, OUI, MOSSOU! POUR LE MATIÈRE DE ÇA, JE PAYE! MAIS JUSTE VOUS REGARDEZ ICI, MON AMI ET JUSTE—VOUS—MARQUEZ—MES—MOTS! JE PAYE—MAIS JE METTE LE DANS LA *'TIMES'*!"

It took me an hour to typewrite that. *Punch's* printers are no doubt familiar with the form after many years of practice and can set it quickly without thinking.

To run (or walk) through old volumes of *Punch* (there is a labor-saving book of selections, *An Evening with Punch,* published at editorial headquarters in 1900) is a return to childhood's happy scenes and an archeological adventure. When you meet an old friend, it adds to the fun to look at the date. In 1868 appeared the original, unsurpassed, nay, unparalleled, though oft-imitated classic in the multitudinous genus of Scottish jokes, by and on the Scotch. The artist is Charles Keene. And by the way, *The Life and Letters of Charles Keene of "Punch",* with Introduction and Notes by Joseph Pennell, is worth looking at. (My printer may set this epoch-making jest with some approximation to the primitive typography—and then go out to lunch.)

Peebles Body (to Townsman who was supposed to be in London on a visit). "E—EH, MAC! YE'RE SUNE HAME AGAIN!"

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Mac. E-EH, IT'S JUST A RUINOUS PLACE, THAT! MUN, A HAD NA' BEEN THE-ERRE ABUNE TWA HOOURS WHEN—BANG—WENT SAXPENCE!!!"

Of fond memory is this, which belongs to the vintage of 1869:

Railway Porter (to Old Lady travelling with a Menagerie of Pets): "'Station Master say, Mum, as Cats is 'Dogs', and Rabbits is 'Dogs', and so's Parrots; but this 'ere 'Tortis' is a Insect, so there ain't no charge for it!"

Probably all the jokes that man has ever made have appeared a few times in *Punch*. That is, all jokes suitable to a family paper. Punch would never permit the indelicacies that are found in the humorous periodicals published across the French, that is, the English Channel. Even in our outrageous days *Punch* is chaste as ice and does not allow such audacities as pass unchallenged in *The New Yorker*, that singular bright spot in heavily censored America.

One fine gift *Punch* derived from the French in the work of Du Maurier, a fantastic mixture of a Thackerayan Victorian and a Latin-Quarter Bohemian. For thirty years Du Maurier played with the more graceful and charming aspects of English manners as observed in the nurseries and drawing-rooms of Good Society. His pretty woman, whom he repeats with an insistent affection at which he laughed himself, might have been drawn from a single perennially young model; but the model is in his own gracious fancy, her conventionality is his private convention, as mythical as Trilby. His adorable children may have scampered in English houses and gardens; their true playmates are Alice and Peter and the children of Kate Greenaway. Du Maurier was satirist, sentimentalist, poet, "as British as the flag", yet half French in blood and more than half French in early training. The elements can be named in common terms, but the unique combination of them has only his name. Criticism seems reluctant to list him among the memorable English novelists. But he has been continuously remembered since the publication of *Trilby*, in 1894. And the pathetic romance of Peter Ibbetson lived long enough to achieve renewed popularity in the cinematograph and only today (1931) has furnished the libretto for an opera. A third of a century does not constitute immortality; but as literary survivals are measured, Du Maurier's reputation is long and broad.

II

Punch has published a fair share of light verse, of that brilliant dexterous metrical profusion which began to flourish about the time he was born and will not be extinct with the now knightly and rather formalistic Owen Seaman, whom may the Muses preserve! For grace, adroitness, antic folly, inspired idiocy,

[*By John Tenniel.*]

A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

Ghost of Queen Elizabeth: "AGREED, HAVE THEY? ODS BODDIKINS! GADS MY LIFE, AND MARRY COME UP, SWEETHEART! IN *my* TIME I'D HAVE KNOCKED ALL THEIR ADDLEPATES TOGETHER TILL THEY *had* AGREED!"

From "Punch", July 31, 1869.

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English versifiers in the last hundred years (together with a few competent cousins in America) have not their equals, their combined abundant equals, in any literature, not even in English literature before the nineteenth century. English comic poetry is as old as Chaucer and it continued to laugh and dance through the hearty age of Elizabeth and the seventeenth century. We know all that; and we can read in any critical handbook that *The Rape of the Lock* is the most brilliant humorous poem in the language. We also know that nothing begins in any period, that *vers de société* began with Prior and that *Don Juan* is the most brilliant humorous poem in the language, and that Winthrop Mackworth Praed, who died two years after Victoria came to the throne, started *vers de société* all over again and is, according to Austin Dobson, the supreme practising and critical authority, the "laureate-elect" of his charmed circle of elegant sportive versifiers. But I am sad about literary handbooks and critical histories. Somehow they do not start us right or let all the real things in. And I am sad about anthologies. Here is Quiller-Couch's *Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. Praed is in it, and Austin Dobson, and, quite properly, Quiller-Couch. But not—oh, why not?—Lewis Carroll, nor W. S. Gilbert, nor Charles Stuart Calverley, nor James Kenneth Stephen. There are a dozen very less than minor poets in that anthology who could be spared without being missed. They never would be missed (wait a minute, we are coming to him); and their absence would leave room for the princes three of ecstatic frivolity, of nonsense passing in shimmering curvature to anti-sense round the universe to abysmal wisdom. Sometimes Victorian editors miss the finest fish. *Punch* did, notoriously, when it rejected "The Yarn of the *Nancy Bell*", because it was too cannibalistic. So the germ-poem from which grew *Pinafore* was published in *Fun*, as were most of the other *Bab Ballads*.

The orchestra will now play the overture of *Pinafore*. Enter, as you would expect, not Little Buttercup, but W. S. Gilbert, a very Victorian-looking gentleman with side-whiskers, just like Matthew Arnold, reading aloud "Captain Reece" from the *Bab Ballads* (illustrated by the author), and carrying under his right or his left arm a play in blank verse, *Pygmalion and Galatea*. Before Gilbert found his twin genius he was already an experienced and successful dramatist and had proved his gift for combining fairy comedy with slightly cynical satire. And he was master of all metrical trickeries, acrobatic, whimsical, delicate, ridiculous, grotesque. English institutions, *mores*, ethical conventions are a vast absurdity to be replotted and counterplotted on a scheme of inverted logic, inevitable and rational, the exquisite perfection of good sense. One solemnly funny thing about the Englishman is his Sense of Duty. The first Bab Ballad, as Gilbert rearranged the final edition, harps on my daughter Duty.

> "Well, well, the chaplain I will seek,
> We'll all be married this day week—
> At yonder church upon the hill;
> It is my duty and I will!"
>
> The sisters, cousins, aunts, and niece,
> And widowed ma of Captain Reece,
> Attended there as they were bid;
> It was their duty, and they did.

And in this ballad and others are the merry mocking at marriage, the thrusting of a pointed tongue at the peerage, the swirling democratic dance of the social classes, the Gilbertian ingredients which are most highly blended in *The Pirates of Penzance* and *The Gondoliers*.

Enter to the balladist and dramatist another very Victorian Britisher, of Irish and Italian blood, with side-whiskers like Huxley. Arthur Sullivan also has a distinguished professional career before he meets his colleague. He is born with a silver horn at his mouth, and at the age of eight can play every wind instrument in his father's band. He studied at Leipzig at a time when Schumann and Schubert,

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[*By Geo. du Maurier.*]

THE TIME-HONOURED BRITISH THREAT

Indignant Anglo-Saxon (to Provincial French Innkeeper, who is bowing his thanks for the final settlement of his exorbitant and much-disputed account). "OH, OUI, MOSSOO! POUR LE MATIÈRE DE *ça*, JE PAYE! MAIS JUSTE VOUS REGARDEZ ICI, MON AMI! ET JUSTE—VOUS—MARQUEZ—MES—MOTS! JE PAYE—MAIS JE METTE LE DANS LA 'TIMES'!"

From "Punch", November 1, 1879.

Von Bülow and Liszt, almost unknown in England, were in the ascendant, and when Wagner's star was rising; he was one of the first to introduce Wagner to English audiences, and he raised the whole standard of orchestral music in England. English critics like to say that his genius was "essentially English"; it was indeed essentially Irish and German, and he was a sort of missionary to musically backward England. Outside the operas, on which academic pundits thought he was wasting his talents, he holds a solitary place in English music of the nineteenth century; he enriched the tradition of English song, the one lovely tradition that England has in any art, except literature, of which it is ally and handmaiden. Sullivan is a supreme song-writer; his music is an interpretation and accompaniment of the words, instead of the words being blurred and meaningless shapes for the melody to utter in passing. To his profuse and prodigal gifts of melody he adds a mastery of orchestration which is second only to that of the great "classic" composers. And by the way, let us remember Mr. Philip Hale's wise observation that there is no sense in the distinction between "classic" and "popular" music; there is only good music and music that is not so good. "The Lost Chord" and "Onward, Christian Soldiers!" are bad, words and music. A hundred songs in the operas are both beautiful and popular. The partnership of Gilbert and Sullivan is a unique case in the history of collaboration, in that we need not raise and cannot answer the question, which is the more important. And it is the only case in the history of opera (though not of single songs) in which the writer of the

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words comes first. The operas are Gilbert and Sullivan—perhaps they agreed on the alphabetical order. Gilbert contrived the divine lunacy of the plots, the witty and sublimely silly patter of the dialogue; and he had a fine sense of melody, sometimes humming the tune to his own words for Sullivan to run into pure musical form. His words have the knack, so seldom found in English lyric poetry, perhaps least often in the very finest, of being singable. His words call for music and suggest it (if Arthur Sullivan is listening to them); his varied and flexible measures expanded the range of English rhythm and metres as truly as did Swinburne's on a higher plane of song. The librettos belong to English comic literature, with Sheridan, with Gay, with Congreve, with the lighter plays of the Elizabethans. They seemed to be intelligible, except for a few British localisms a trifle out of date and place, when Mr. Winthrop Ames tossed the pearls to Broadway audiences. Earlier American audiences had welcomed the operas and whistled and hummed them from Boston to San Francisco. The Savoy Opera in London was for years a national institution. Open the librettos anywhere and the tunes sing in your ears; if you have a good musical memory you can hear Sullivan playing didoes and rolleries with the orchestra, parodying Italian operatic effects, burlesquing British patriotic, especially maritime, heroics, and pouring out enough love music in one act to furnish forth six of the witless confections that on Broadway are called musical comedies, being neither. Sometimes the Sullivan air is doubly delicious, set to words of enchanting foolishness.—

> Oh, amorous dove!
> Type of Ovidius Naso!
> This heart of mine
> Is soft as thine,
> Although I dare not say so!

Let us make an examination paper on the Gilbert and Sullivan "canon" and the *Bab Ballads*, such as Calverley made for *Pickwick*. It is an open competition; but holders of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English must first qualify by answering satisfactorily the question why these questions are less important in the study of English literature than questions on a third-rate Elizabethan play.

1. In what opera is another G. & S. opera called "infernal nonsense"? Comment on the justice of this remark.

2. Give all the rhymes, English and foreign, for "twenty".

3. What is the stage direction of "To the Terrestrial Globe"?

4. In what number of what opera is the work of Mrs. Emily Post foreshadowed and criticized? In what ballad is the subject exhaustively treated?

5. Quote (in full) Gilbert's limerick.

6. Where are 3/4 time and 4/4 time played together?

7. What is the most ingenious paradox? For what year was it computed, and how does that determine the date of the opera?

8. Which Bab Ballad is touching, pathetic, not intended to be humorous?

9. What does "sat agee" mean, and what is the rhyme for it?

10. Which Bab Ballads contain germinal hints of (a) *Pinafore*, (b) *The Yeomen of the Guard*, (c) *Patience*?

11. Where is attention called lyrically to a delayed exit?

12. Who was Captain Shaw?

13. Where are musical instruments and social distinction juxtaposed?

14. Mention patter songs dealing with (a) insomnia, (b) miscellaneous information, (c) people better dead, (d) the day's work of a king, (e) the use of dukes and duchesses, (f) recipe for dragoon soup.

15. Place, and if possible quote, the words of a duet and chorus that are in another language than English.

16. What is the relation of "Basingstoke" to madness?

17. Who said "of shreds and patches"? Who said it first?

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18. Complete the following quotations, giving (a) the lines that go before, (b) the lines that come after:

(a) Fold your flapping wings,
Soaring legislature!
Stoop to little things—
Stoop to ——

(b) Now a father it shocks,
And it whitens his locks
When his little babe ——

(c) When the coster's finished jumping on his mother

(d) Is either a little Liberal,
Or else a little Conservative!

(e) There is beauty in the bellow of the blast,
There is grandeur in the growling of the gale

(f) For I'm called little ——

(g) Twenty love-sick ——

(h) And so do his sisters and his cousins and his ——

(i) An ultra-poetical, super-æsthetical ——

(j) To make the punishment fit ——

(k) You shall quickly be parsonified,
Conjugally matrimonified

(l) And I polished up the handle of ——

Oh, sweet truncated lines torn from your text, and giving but a hint of what is coming, of last adjacent and continuous next, you fairy fragments set my brain to humming.

III

Calverley might have passed the foregoing examination with flying colors, or devised a more intricate one, if his bright flame had not been quenched just when the Savoy operas were in their first blazing glory. Gilbert was a professional man of the theatre. Calverley was a scholarly amateur; his three hundred pages of translations from Greek and Latin cost him more labor and no doubt seemed to him more important than his hundred pages of original verse. Yet in those few pages he became the founder of a new school of university wits, the mockingly lyrical college boys of Oxford and Cambridge, and in his brilliant youth he was, without knowing it, the father of modern English parody. Like other forms of literature, parody has a diffuse and dubious paternity and forebears past counting. The remote ancestors of parody are buried in Greece and Italy; for modern readers they are still buried, though the word παρῳδία is Greek and *The Acharnians,* in which Aristophanes burlesqued Euripides, still throws professors of Greek into convulsions of merriment. In English—not to go back too far—Calverley has an immediate ancestor, spontaneous and underivative, except from his victims, in William E. Aytoun, whose *Book of Ballads: Edited By Bon Gaultier* takes rather crackling shots at Tennyson, Macaulay, Bulwer Lytton (1845, while they are all young). Before Aytoun, and well before the birth of Victoria, the brothers Horace and James Smith, in *Rejected Addresses,* imitated Scott, Wordsworth, Southey, Byron, Coleridge, Crabbe, Moore, so gracefully without malice that both Scott and Byron said that they could not believe they had not written the verses attributed to them.

But it was Calverley who brought parody to perfection, fashioned it of silver steel with triple point, hitting not only diction and style, metre and rhythm, but intellectual idiom, mode of thought. Consider that since Calverley (*Fly Leaves,* 1872) hundreds of nimble versifiers, minor private marksmen and major generals, too, including Swinburne and Kipling, have pierced the bull's-eye; and consider that many targets are shot to pieces, that nobody wants any more parodies of the standard poets (whoever writes another parody of *The Rubáiyát*—Calverley did not try it—should be shot with something more metallic than

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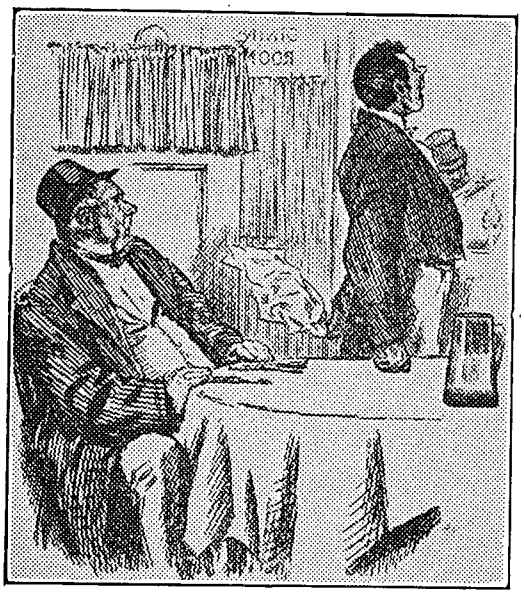

[*By Charles Keene.*]

FIGURATIVE

Head Waiter (the Old Gent had wished for a stronger Cheese). "HI! JAMES—LET LOOSE THE GORGONZOLA!"

From "Punch", February 16, 1889.

words); and then turn to the untarnished lines of Calverley. He was the first that ever burst with triple and quadruple rhymes into Mrs. Browning's undulant sea ingeraldine:

In the Gloaming to be roaming, where the crested waves are foaming,
And the shy mermaidens coaming locks that ripple to their feet;
When the Gloaming is I never made the ghost of an endeavor
To discover—but whatever were the hour, it would be sweet.

"The Cock and the Bull" strikes with cruel accuracy through Browning's mere mannerisms to his very heart. A few lines will not give a real taste of it—it must be read entire. And the ballads of Rossetti, which at their best, when the reader is in the right mood, are strangely enchanting and at their worst, or when the reader is not feeling well, are babbling bastards, have to struggle to mount again on their magic wings after Calverley has brought them down with:

The auld wife sat at her ivied door,
(Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese)
A thing she had frequently done before;
And her spectacles lay on her aproned knees.

When Calverley aimed at the once popular Jean Ingelow he used a shotgun which swept the whole flock of languid lady love lyrists, of both sexes, who drooped over Victorian pianos:

O, if billows and pillows and hours and flowers
And all the brave rhymes of an older day,
Could be furled together, this genial weather,
And carted, or carried on "wafts" away,
Nor ever be trotted out—ah me!
How much fewer volumes of verse there'd be!

But Calverley and all his satirical allies and successors did not exterminate the multitudinous flock; even at our late date of cynicism and mockery it still sobs and croons over the radio.

The story has been often told, in tones of admiring surprise, that when Queen Victoria requested (or commanded) Lewis Carroll to send her a copy of his next book she received to her admiring surprise *An Elementary Treatise on Determinants* by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, mathematical lecturer at Christ Church, Oxford. Lewis Carroll, like all men of genius, is amazing, wonderful, one of the highest gods of wonderland. But his career and character are not surprising; that is, the component elements are not conflicting, but fit together with perfect logic. The least surprising thing is that the creator of Alice was a mathematician. Only a mathematician could have made her and the world beyond the looking-glass. I wish that my friend, Professor Reginald Fessenden, the physicist and engineer who invented the heterodyne on your radio, would write this paragraph and explain to you, as he explained to me—I shall miss the technical finesse of it—why only a mathematician was capable of conceiving life in the dimensions beyond the three that are familiar in our common Euclidean world. He is at home in negative quantities and inverted

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values, of contracting and expanding bodies whose change of size is far subtler and more reasonable than Swift's play with big and little people.

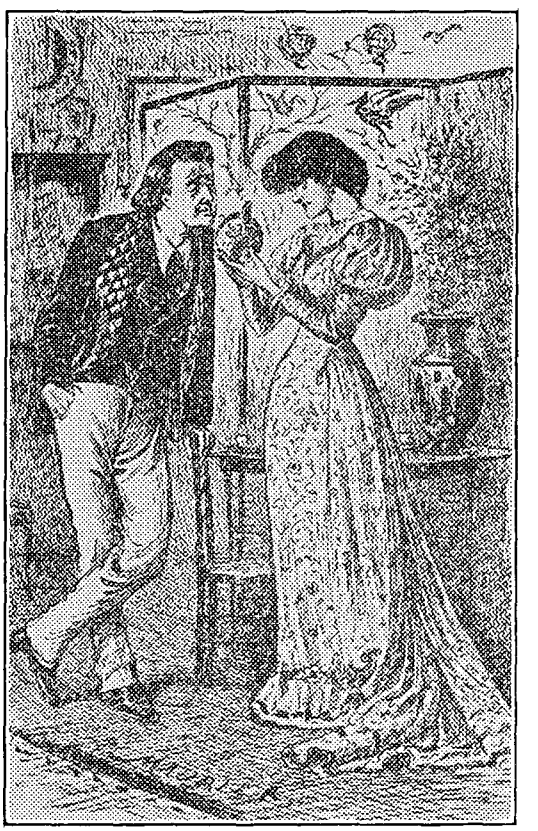
The turning of time backward, so that the Queen remembers only what happens next week and Sylvie and Bruno are at ease in a universe wherein the clock runs the other way, is not a clever flip-flop possible to the bright fancy of H. G. Wells or (in terms of gravity) to Frank Stockton. It is a universe in which the mathematician habitually abides and which he takes for granted. It has long been a commonplace, since the biographical facts were known, to trace the mathematician in the complex card game of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and in the more complicated chess game of *Through the Looking-Glass*. But the matter is more profound than that. When the intellectual history of our era, our general block of real time, is written, it will be found that Lewis Carroll discovered relativity before Einstein was born; certainly it will be understood that relativity and Alice are inherent in mathematics, and that a mathematician was required to discover them, required in the sense of the uniquely indispensable and in the sense of deterministic necessity.

Lewis Carroll did not invent topsyturvydom. He visited it every day and simply reported it like a good scientific observer; and it was not standing on its head; it was right side up as he was accustomed to find it. Mathematics has been used to explain Lewis Carroll. But the foot is in the other shoe now, as is appropriate in a universe where space goes in many curves and time goes at least two ways. Now the physicists are using Lewis Carroll to explain the mathematical universe to us. And they do it very well because these new physicists are getting to be beautifully poetical and literary, that is, human, at least when they talk to us duffers. In Eddington's *The Nature of the Physical World* there are four illustrative references to Lewis Carroll. It is true that the illustrations are used chiefly to illustrate what is inexplicable—and that in itself is perfect Lewis Carroll. Here is one quotation from Eddington, with his italics:

"*Something unknown is doing we don't know what*—that is what our theory amounts to. It does not sound like a particularly illuminating theory. I have read something like it elsewhere—

The slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe

. . . Eight slithy toves gyre and gimble in the oxygen wabe; seven in nitrogen. By admitting a few numbers even 'Jabberwocky' may become scientific."



[*By Geo. du Maurier.*]

THE SIX-MARK TEA-POT

Æsthetic Bridegroom. "IT IS QUITE CONSUMMATE, IS IT NOT?"

Intense Bride. "IT IS, INDEED! OH, ALGERNON, LET US LIVE UP TO IT!"

From "Punch", October 30, 1880.

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Mathematics, however does not wholly account for Lewis Carroll. Professor Dodgson is as inexplicable as Professor Eddington's Universe. There is one comic side of the man that squeezes with difficulty into the picture. He was ordained deacon and if he had not stammered he might have become a priest. He was severely respectable and was offended by Gilbert's irreverence and impropriety. This is explicable if we remember that he lived at Oxford during its most pious period. Some things about him are not explicable—and never can be explicable about any man of genius—except to say that the fairy godmothers went insane at his christening, that his father was Merlin, and you remember who Merlin's father was, an intruder at Oxford but luckily never exorcised. Lewis Carroll was a born poet and an exquisitely trained and practised poet. Do not forget the poems that introduce *Alice* and *Through the Looking-Glass*. He knew all the tricks of verse as well as did Gilbert and Calverley and Lang and Dobson and—add whomever you like. He invented telescope words and made them part of the language, or his millions of readers made them part of it; and his use of words already in the language is precise, puristic, as one would expect of a learned Oxonian. Long before Swinburne was everybody's game, Lewis Carroll played it twice, in "Atalanta in Camden-Town" and "The Manlet".—

Oh, that languishing yawn!
Oh, those eloquent eyes!
I was drunk with the dawn
Of a splendid surmise—
I was stung by a look, I was slain by a tear, by a tempest of sighs.

On the theme of "There was a little man and he had a little gun"—

The music of Midsummer madness
Shall sting him with many a bite,
Till, in rapture or rollicking sadness,
He shall groan with a gloomy delight;
He shall swathe them like mists of the morning,
In platitudes luscious and limp,
Such as deck, with a deathless adorning,
The Song of the Shrimp!

I am prepared to defend against all critical and political contestants the proposition that "The Three Voices" is the funniest poem, of any length, in the English language. And I will also maintain, by violence if necessary, that if Tenniel was the Heaven-appointed (also wisely appointed by Lewis Carroll) illustrator of *Alice* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, A. B. Frost was designed by the gods to design the pictures for *Phantasmagoria*—and for a different kind of poetic fantasy, *Huckleberry Finn*. One of the pleasures of wandering in the nurseries of Heaven is that the greatest boys meet there with understanding and without the interference of literary police judges or scientific critics who know nothing about any science.

Lewis Carroll was a master of narrative prose. The tale of Alice runs on with such an air of naïve improvisation that you may overlook its perfection by taking it for granted, just as perfect things should be taken for granted and seem to happen of themselves. Since *Alice* (1865) there have been hundreds of tales of no-man's land and up-side-down-dom—Lewis Carroll lived to note without vexation that he had begun a literary *genre*. Read any of his followers and see how *conscious* they are that they are writing unreality. Lewis Carroll was of course conscious and deliberate in all his effects, but he seems simply to write what is *so*, because it is; he does not waver in his conviction, or condescend to us children or play the dirty trick of winking over the heads of children at stupid adults. Get down on the floor to be among the gods. But don't brush your knees when you get up.

Lewis Carroll holds the Olympian altitude. He never deviates out of sense (Dryden would have understood that). He rises clear out of the range of Edward Lear, who proclaims himself a writer of nonsense. Lear was a professional painter of landscapes and birds and his ornithological studies are said to rank

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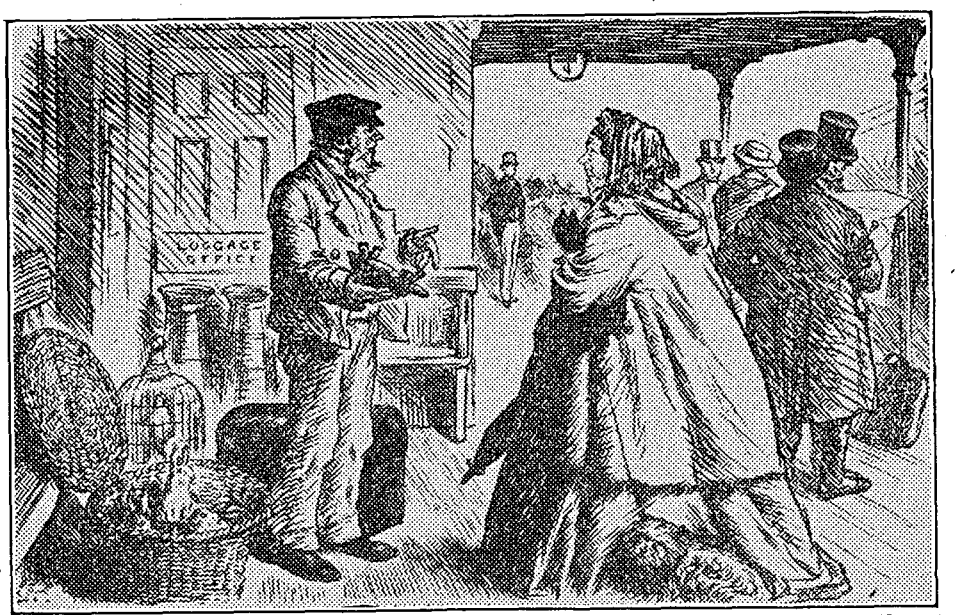
with those of Audubon in accuracy and beauty. His nonsense verses, illustrated with his own intentionally out-of-drawing drawings were originally done for the amusement of children and were not at first intended for the general public. But the public liked them and encouraged him to repeat, rather tiresomely; they were something new (the first *Book of Nonsense*, 1846), and they have not yet lost all their freshness. But Lear set going, if he did not invent, that swarming house-fly of verse, the limerick. It takes wide magnanimity to pardon him for that. The limerick has been more deftly turned by others than by Father Lear, especially in its most popular and least printable examples, which Lear never heard; for he died full of honors in 1888, celebrated in a poem by Tennyson and a critical decree by Ruskin. Peace to his ashes! There was an old fellow named Lear who died in a wonderful year, in one, eight, eight, eight, as I rise to relate, and I hope I shall make the truth clear; because in that year Lewis Carroll was finishing the first part of *Sylvie and Bruno* and at the Savoy (both *faire* and *vivre*) *The Yeomen of the Guard* was enjoying its first run, and Jack Point, the Strolling Jester, was singing:

Oh, a private buffoon is a light-hearted loon,
If you listen to popular rumour;
From morning to night he's so joyous and bright,
And he bubbles with wit and good humour!
He's so quaint and so terse, both in prose and in verse;
Yet though people forgive his transgression,
There are one or two rules that all family fools
Must observe if they love their profession.

God save the Queen! The jesters can take care of themselves.



[*By Charles Keene.*]

ZOOLOGY

Railway Porter (to Old Lady travelling with a Menagerie of Pets). "'STATION MASTER SAY, MUM, AS CATS IS 'DOGS', AND RABBITS IS 'DOGS', AND SO'S PARROTS; BUT THIS ERE 'TORTIS' IS A INSECT, SO THERE AIN'T NO CHARGE FOR IT!" *From "Punch", March 6, 1869.*

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STEVENSON'S LIFE IN SAMOA

HIS OWN DESCRIPTION OF THE DAYS AT VAILIMA

by W. H. Triggs

SOME time in the year 1892 I was on the staff of a New Zealand daily paper, the *Christchurch Press*, and happened to be spending a holiday in Auckland. An old Wellington friend, Mr. L. H. Balfour Wilson, whom I met in the street, told me he had come up to Auckland to see his cousin, Robert Louis Stevenson, who was on his way back to Samoa after staying for some time in Sydney, and he asked me if I would like to be introduced to him. I gladly accepted. We found Stevenson in the saloon of the mail steamer, and, making me sit down beside him, he at once made me feel at home—so much so that I was bold enough to request an interview for my paper. He asked me what he was to talk about, and I said there were a number of young students at Canterbury College, Christchurch, who were great admirers of his work, who would, I was sure, be very grateful to him for a little advice as to what general authors they should read for the cultivation of their style. I see now it was rather an impudent request, and the great author would have been quite justified in putting me off. Instead, he at once delivered what was really a valuable little lecture, or rather, in its perfection of form, an essay, on the subject. He warned the young students, very solemnly, against Carlyle, lest they should be led into imitating his peculiar mannerisms. When I mentioned Scott, he replied that that prince of story-tellers was somewhat lax in point of style. He spoke very highly of Walter Pater. The interview, when printed in *The Press*, made a great "score" and was copied by some of the London papers.

Shortly after this, I received from the great writer a charming note, acknowledging a copy of the paper containing the article. He had often, he said, been interviewed by "beasts of the field", and it was a treat to find what he had actually said faithfully reproduced. "But why, O why, my dear Mr. Triggs," he whimsically added, "did you say I had long hair? It is years since I wore my hair long." The truth was that I had been so absorbed with the matter of the literary *causerie* that it was not until I came to write up my report that the thought suddenly occurred to me that my readers would expect some personal description of the author whom they loved and admired through his books, but whom very few of them had seen in the flesh. I had, and have now, a vivid recollection of his kindly brown eyes, and the pleasant Scotch "burr" in his cultured voice, but I had not the remotest idea of how he was dressed, or any other personal characteristics. The "long hair" must have come from a recollection of one of his earlier portraits.

A few months later, I had an opportunity of visiting Samoa, and I was thrilled with

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the idea of meeting R. L. S. again, and even seeing him in his island home, with his devoted Samoan retainers around him. Alas! When I got to Apia, I found he had gone on a visit to Honolulu. It was a great disappointment. But still there were some compensations. It was my first visit to a tropical island; the Samoans were certainly a most attractive race; and I met several interesting European residents who could tell me not only about the politics of Samoa, then a matter of European interest, owing to Stevenson's letters in *The Times*, but also something about the great author himself and his surroundings.

On my return to New Zealand, I wrote an article on "R. L. Stevenson in Samoa" for *Cassell's Magazine*, to which I was an occasional contributor. I thought it only fair, especially after his kindness to me, to let Stevenson see the article before publication, and I did so, asking him to strike out any inaccuracies, or any details which he considered unsuitable for publication. By the return mail I received from him my manuscript, together with twelve closely written quarto pages of annotations and supplementary information. Stevenson was then in the full tide of success, with publishers and editors eager to take anything from his pen, and yet he could put himself to all this trouble for a young colonial journalist who had no claim whatever upon his indulgence. With the help of this valuable document the article for *Cassell's* was in part rewritten, and very much improved; it appeared shortly before Stevenson's death in 1894.

Many fanciful accounts, some of them grossly inaccurate, of Stevenson's life in Samoa have been published. This authentic description, dictated to his amanuensis, Mrs. Strong, and signed by him, is now printed with the consent of Mr. Lloyd Osbourne, Stevenson's stepson and literary executor. The document itself I am presenting to the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, where it will always be accessible to students and lovers of Stevenson, whose name in New Zealand alone is legion. To me the only painful part of this labor of love is that it recalls the slips and errors made by the young journalist and I feel ashamed of my youthful presumption and the trouble I gave to so distinguished a figure in English letters, who was at the time so much occupied with his own work. But the gracious courtesy and consideration which he displayed will always be gratefully remembered.

STEVENSON'S UNPUBLISHED NOTES

The following annotations and letter by Robert Louis Stevenson were dictated by him at Vailima, on the sixth of December, eighteen ninety-three. They are printed here for the first time. Before each one I have given briefly, in parentheses, the substance of the passages in the original manuscript which drew forth R. L. S.'s generous comments:

(A rather disparaging description of Apia, stressing the small inducement to a popular author who had to keep in touch with the English reading public all over the world, to make it his home. The "bright spots in the picture" were the arrival of a mail steamer once a month, and a small public library, started by an appeal from the British Consul, Mr. Cusack-Smith. With Mr. Stevenson, it was added, "it was purely a question of health"; he had tried previously nearly every part of the world reputed to favor recovery from his disease.)

Certainly if this were all I would prefer to go to hell. Nor was it purely an affair of health. Honolulu suited me equally well. The high Alps probably better. I chose Samoa instead of Honolulu for instance for the simple and eminently satisfactory reason that it was less civilized. Can you not conceive that it is awful fun? As for the library, it was begun to a not inconsiderable extent from duplicates and discards from my own overflowing one. My own library was brought out from England. [Mr. Stevenson's own library fills shelves of two large rooms from floor to ceiling. *Note by the amanuensis.*]

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(A reference to his cruise in the *Casca*.)

I made one cruise for my health. I have made two others for the fun of the thing. The first cruise was in the yacht *Casca* and lasted a year. The second in the sixty-four-ton trading schooner *Equator* lasted six months, and the third in the trading steamer *Janet Nicholl* about four months.

(Several topographical inaccuracies.)

My dear Sir, you have got into such a devil of a tangle about the way to my house that I have a difficulty in knowing how to put you right. One part of the road, which you seem to have ridden, *is* good, and it *does* lie through plantations although not thick ones. Get past that, and you come to a road that is not a road at all and to bush that is only now (this year) being cleared in patches. You will at best understand the position when I tell you that all the wood to build my house was carried about a third of the way on men's shoulders, and that all the stores and parcels are brought by pack-saddle. We have a couple of old Auckland tram-car horses, a most excellent selection, the biggest and handsomest horses in the island. You should see them coming up through the forest with its tall trees, lianas, wild pineapples, etc. The Sydney Civil Service Coöperative Society—our universal provider—are always most attentive to Donald and Edie whose tonnage they have accurately guaged and pack accordingly.

(Statement quoted from one of Stevenson's writings that he gave four hundred pounds for his land; the writer in *Cassell's* adding that it was considered in the district that he gave a good price for it, but that he must "have spent that sum greatly magnified, upon it since".)

My house alone has cost me not less at least than two thousand pounds, so you may conceive how far you underrate the cost of things in this happy island. I bought about three hundred and fifty acres at about one pound an acre it was thought extravagant at the time even by myself but nobody could buy land so cheap now. There are other seventy-three acres in dispute.

(The Samoans, notwithstanding their natural antipathy to work, did work for Stevenson, "from whom they are sure of good wages and good treatment".)

It may surprise you to learn that I pay lower wages than anybody in Samoa and it is my boast that I get better served, visitors have frequently said Vailima is the only place where you can see Samoans run. People always tell you that Samoans will not work, or even if they do never stay with you beyond a few months. Such seems to be the general experience; it is not mine. The reason of this is neither high wages nor indulgent treatment. Samoans rather enjoy discipline, they like however to be used like gentlefolk. They like to be used with scrupulous justice—they like a service of which they can be proud. This we try to give them by "trying" all cases of misdemeanor in the most serious manner with interpreters, forms of oath, etc., and by giving them a particular dress on great occasions. If during your visit to Apia you saw a few handsome smart fellows in a striped jacket and a Royal Stewart tartan native lavalava, which as you are aware is a kind of kilt and *not* a loin cloth, they were Vailima boys. We have a tree at Xmas for all hands, a great native feast upon my birthday, and try in other ways to make them feel themselves of the family. Of course no Samoan works except for his family. The Chief is the master, to serve another clan may be possible for a short time, and to get money for a specific purpose. Accordingly in order to insure permanent service in Samoa I have tried to play the native Chief with necessary European variations. Just now it looks as if I was succeeding. Our last triumph was at the annual missionary feast. Up to now our boys had always gone home and marched into the show with their own individual village. This time of their own accord they marched in a body by themselves into the meeting clad in the Vailima uniform, and on their entrance

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were saluted as "Tama Ona" which may be literally translated into Scotch "Mac Richies" (children of the rich man).

We have a child on the place, a small fellow of eight or thereabouts; my daughter had amused herself in dressing him out in fine lavalava, white linen coat, and straw hat. In this guise he was strutting about in front of the Tivoli Hotel when the proprietor noticed him. "Hi Youngster", he asked in Samoan, "who may you be?" Feloa'i replied with pride "I am one of the Vailima men!"

Of course this almost involves discharging nobody; they must learn to count upon this house as a permanent refuge and I am rather hopeful that I may be able to carry it out upon these lines.

Cases of misconduct must be met with some sort of punishment. At first I always discharged; now that we are beginning to take so much the character of a clan, and that, by the previous process of discharges, as by survival of the fittest we have so good a class together, I'm trying to substitute fines upon a large scale. The other day I cut down the wages of one defaulter by one half, this was cheerfully accepted and the man is still with us. In fines, if the boy is Catholic the amount is taken by the culprit to the Catholic Mission, if Protestant to the Protestant Mission.

If you had come up about five o'clock you would have found Mr. Osbourne and Mrs. Strong playing lawn tennis with some of the boys who take it *à tour de rôle*, and sometimes go on with the game by themselves after the bosses go in to dinner—*bosses* I cannot say they are with regard to the game, for some of the Samoans are capital players. It is particularly pleasant too, to hear them singing in their houses at night, shouting with laughter and speechifying. At my last birthday feast there were great doings, one or two of which illustrate the feeling of the boys. (When I say "boys" I mean men.) You must know that every chief who respects himself in Samoa must have an officer called a Tulafale usually Englished "Speaking man". It is a part and perhaps the most momentous of this officer's attributions to cry out the names at the ava drinking. This is done in a peculiar howl or song very difficult to acquire and I may say to understand. He must also be fairly well versed in the true science of Samoan names, as no chief above a certain rank is ever "called" under his own name. He has another, an "ava" name for the purpose. Well, I had no Tulafale, and Mr. Osburne held a competition in which three or four of them howled against each other. The judgment of Apollo fell upon one boy who was instantly a foot taller. I am sorry to make such confessions of my disrespectability but I must continue. I had not only no Tulafale—I had no *ava name*. I was "called" plain bald "Tusitala" or "Ona" which is only a soubriquet at the best. On this coming to the knowledge of a high chief who was present he paid me the graceful attention of giving me one of his own, and I was kindly warned before the event that I must look out and recognize the new name of Au-Mai-Taua-Ma-Le-Manuvao. The feast was laid on the floor of the hall; fifty feet by about eight, of solid provisions, fifteen pigs cooked whole underground, two hundred pounds of beef, ditto of pork, two hundred pineapples, over four hundred head of taro, together with fish, chickens, Samoan prepared dishes, shrimps, oranges, sugar cane, bananas, biscuit and tinned salmon in a proportion. The biscuit and tinned salmon, though not exactly to our taste, are a favourite luxury of the Samoan. By night, and we sat down at 4 p. m. there was nothing left barring a few oranges and a single bunch of bananas. This is not to say of course that it was all eaten, the Samoans are comparatively dainty at a feast; but so soon as we rose, the arduous and difficult task of dividing what remained between the different guests was at once entered into, and the retainers of our guests white and Samoan departed laden to the sea. The wretched giver of a feast thus

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wakens on the morrow with a clean house, but it is not all loss. All gifts or favors in Samoa are to be repaid in kind and in a proportion, and to my feast nobody had come empty-handed. It was rather strange to look out next morning and see my court yard alive with cocks, hens and chickens.

(A statement that the white population was about four hundred and "the majority of these are Germans".)

No. An ignorant error continually repeated. There are only ninety Germans. The Americans less than twenty—and the rest English.

(Description of the Stevenson "ménage" and the zeal and efficiency with which Mrs. Stevenson directed and controlled the native staff.)

Here is the correct hierarchy at Vailima. *Mr. Osbourne* is the bookkeeper, general business manager and looks after the overseer and his gang of outside boys. *Mrs. Stevenson*—Agriculturist in correspondence with Kew Gardens at Honolulu, Brisbane, Florida, etc. Is general referee on all matters of science. Special charge of her own two experimental gardens. General supervisor of all the additions and improvements; for example, has just engineered a court of cement between the house and kitchen, working with her hands, when her tongue failed her. Also doctor. *Mrs. Strong* acts as my amanuensis and has the charge of the household and house and kitchen boys. Thanks to her training, whereas we began with an Australian table-maid, German cook, etc., we are now equally well served and better by a set of Samoan boys. *Mr. Stevenson* may be discredited as playing the part of veiled prophet in general. He rarely appears upon the the scene unless someone has misbehaved; you must not be led into the idea that these are frequent occasions or the misdemeanours serious. The boys are awfully good on the whole. They are more like a set of well-behaved young ladies. They are a perfectly honest people. Nothing of value has ever been taken from our house, where doors and windows are always left open, and upon one occasion when white ants attacked the silver chest, the whole of my family plate lay spread upon the floor of the hall for two days, unguarded. The hall is on the ground floor; we all sleep upstairs.

(Description of Mrs. Stevenson's dress in the house, as "a single loose, flowing dress, such as Samoan women wear"; and "not unfrequently going barefoot".)

No such things as shoes or stockings are ever worn by any of us at Vailima. At home, my costume consists invariably of an undershirt and a pair of trousers, *all told*. You seem to have got the notion of my Apia costume, which is perfectly correct consisting, if you please, not of a flannel but a fine linen shirt, and proper corduroy riding breeches and elegant half boots. [Mr. Stevenson's riding suits are made by Chorley the tailor, Sydney; and his boots by Abbey of the same place and that's as much as to say they are perfect. *Note added by the amanuensis.*]

(Mr. Stevenson is an early riser. For the sake of change he not unfrequently takes a run to Sydney, or Honolulu by the mail steamer, and on board ship he has been known to turn out at two o'clock in the morning to start writing.)

I rise with the sun, neither before nor after. I have never "put in" more than eight hours, and that I consider about three too many. I generally begin about six and finish when luncheon is ready at twelve.

(Local opponents of Stevenson's policy in espousing the cause of the "Arch Rebel", Mataafa, declared that "he had mistaken his vocation when he set up as a politician". They concluded that "the romantic in Mataafa's character and career appealed to the element of romance and chivalry in Stevenson himself", but they contended that he was "backing the wrong horse".)

I think I have been able to identify the source of your account of my political views in general. I shall content myself by saying that it is not yet proved that I "am sometimes" or indeed ever have been "mistaken in

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my political views". Indeed it looks very like as if I was to be proved right. If you had asked about a year ago you would have been told that I was out of my element "had mistaken my vocation" and was "romantic" in my opposition to the Chief Justice and President, it will scarcely do to say so now. In other questions where I have not been so fortunate as to have my way, you are told something of the same thing; at least I am entitled to the benefit of the doubt.

(Letter from Stevenson.)

Dear Sir,

These are the main criticisms that I have to make and I have been led in making them into much more detail than I had anticipated. You will of course understand that I have been led into that detail solely for the purpose of clearness, but I think that by vigorous selection and rejection you will have here the bones of a very interesting article, with the somewhat unusual quality of being true. It has been a pleasure to me to place at your disposal any facts which appeared needful to enable you to attain your purpose. I am little accustomed among newspaper men to be used with so much courtesy and consideration. So far all was plain sailing, I had merely to annotate those points in which you were led in error. It is a very different question when you ask me to volunteer information on my own hook. I am very anxious to please you for the reason above stated but I own I do not like the task.

About reading: I can tell you what I have been reading in the last month. Wodrow's *Analecta, The Cloud of Witnesses*, the *Life of James Renwick*, Fountainhall's *Decisions*, *The Cruise of the Alert*, *Rob Roy* by Walter Scott for the eight-hundred-and-fiftieth time, a month's file of *Figaro* and the *Saturday Review*—and I have still the daily *Times* before me. There is a full confession and it does not seem to me very interesting; neither you nor your readers will probably know one half of the books mentioned. About my life: I rise at six, work till twelve, lunch then, and either write or read again, or walk or ride or receive an occasional guest, or if my company are Samoans, I may sit down to a solemn ava drinking with the correct libations and salutations. This is a thing in which I consider myself a past master, and there are perhaps not twenty whites in the world who could say as much. At six I dine, on fish and claret, and go to bed at eight. It seems to me that the main defect of your paper is to hold me up as a helpless invalid. Although the routine of my life is so sedentary I often make considerable excursions on horseback or otherwise.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

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DEAN OF AMERICAN LETTERS: JULIAN HAWTHORNE

by Lionel Stevenson

THE Sunday literary section of a San Francisco newspaper is usually distinguished these days by a series of essays and reviews which differ remarkably from the prevailing type of journalistic writing. A cachet of stylistic elegance and a certain spaciousness of outlook recall older literary standards, but the incisive opinions which are expressed on current topics do not sound like those of a writer who is eighty-four years old and has been actively engaged in writing for sixty years. The name attached to them, however, is Julian Hawthorne, and it first appeared in print in August, 1869, when *Putnam's Magazine* published two sonnets sent from Germany by a twenty-four-year-old student of engineering. Having written some fifty books in the intervening years, to say nothing of having done incalculable magazine and newspaper work; having been a best-seller between the seventies and the nineties not only in the United States but even more extensively in England; and being always an independent, emphatic personality with the courage of his convictions, Julian Hawthorne may safely be offered the title of Dean of American Literature.

After a number of his short stories had come out in *Harper's Magazine* and *Scribner's*, his first novel, entitled *Bressant*, ran as a serial in *Appleton's Journal* in the early months of 1873. When it was issued in book form it was widely reviewed on both sides of the Atlantic and his literary fame was launched. Thereafter his fecundity was astonishing. Often three and four of his books appeared in a single year. Even after the necessary cancellation has been made of some duplicates, disguised under different titles in England and America, the total list of his books stands at something like forty-seven, and all but six or seven of them were published between 1873 and 1896.

That period of American literary history is at present much neglected by historians and critics. Except for three or four prominent figures, who are treated individually, the last quarter of the nineteenth century is ignored in favor of the established classics preceding it and the exciting innovations that followed it. Labelled the "Gilded Age" or the "Era of Expansion", it is handed over to the chroniclers of finance and politics; one might assume that it had no literature beyond the contributions of Mark Twain and Bret Harte, W. D. Howells and Henry James. Those four names indicate the two conflicting currents of the time. Twain and Harte, prolific and popular, exploited the picturesque and comic and emphatically "American" elements to thrill both their compatriots and the European onlookers. Howells and James, on the other hand, won attention slowly, and only from the cultivated minority, with their attempts to rival the more subtle and realistic workmanship which was developing in the Old World.

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Apart from either camp, but providing valuable sidelights upon both, was the group of popular novelists in which Julian Hawthorne held a prominent place.

The beginning of his career coincided very neatly with the beginning of the new era. Mark Twain, with a reputation based solely on "The Jumping Frog" and a few kindred sketches, arrived in New York in 1868 from California via the Mediterranean, and proceeded to publish *Innocents Abroad*. Early in 1871, his friend Bret Harte, similarly depending on the success of a handful of gold-rush stories and verses, made the remove from West to East. Thereafter both of them produced book after book with grim energy. Howells, meanwhile, who had been serving an apprenticeship in other literary forms, published his first novel in 1871, and James followed suit with *A Passionate Pilgrim* in 1875. Just half way between them, therefore, Hawthorne made his début with *Bressant*.

The other important fiction of 1873 included Howells's second novel, *A Chance Acquaintance*; Harte's first collection of stories since leaving California, *Mrs. Skaggs's Husbands*; Twain's *Roughing It* and *The Gilded Age*, his first books since the narrative of his European trip; Edward Eggleston's second book; Lew Wallace's *The Fair God*; J. G. Holland's *Arthur Bonnicastle*; E. P. Roe's second; Edgar Fawcett's *Purple and Fine Linen*; and *Never Again* by somebody called Dr. Mayo. In the eyes of the general reading and review-writing public, the last-named authors bulked remarkably large. Roe and Fawcett were undoubtedly the most popular novelists of the decade, and the mysterious Dr. Mayo, whose book was considered somewhat improper, got as much attention as Twain and Harte and Howells combined.

Julian Hawthorne stood apart from all of them, a fact which soon began to annoy the critics, who found him impossible to classify. His literary ability was obviously far in advance of Fawcett and Roe and their tribe, and yet he used melodramatic episodes which appealed to their following. He seemed to know both England and the United States thoroughly, and much of continental Europe as well, and yet he showed none of the superiority of the expatriate. He avoided the current literary prejudices with bland tolerance, even while provoking new animosities by doing so; in 1884, for example, he stated in the *Princeton Review* that "Mr. James and Mr. Howells have done more than all the rest of us to make our literature respectable during the last ten years"; yet four years later he published a warm tribute to E. P. Roe, whose death had given some of the superior critics occasion to call him "shoddy" and "sentimental"; and within a few months he was vigorously championing Zola and berating the censorship.

Julian Hawthorne's peculiar position can only be understood by reference to his early years. He was seven years old when his father's appointment to the consulate in Liverpool caused the removal of the family from New England to Old, and there the next seven years were spent. Anyone who has read the elder Hawthorne's English notebooks will remember the almost daily record of long walks with "J——" and exploration of churches, villages, and ruined castles. During his most impressionable years, therefore, the boy had not only the opportunity of seeing the most famous and beautiful parts of Britain, but also the companionship of a particularly gifted literary man who was also enjoying a first excursion into history.

There was no intention, however, of having the son follow his father's profession. On the contrary, he was firmly warned against considering a literary career, and decided to take up civil engineering. When he was fourteen he returned to America, and in due course entered the Lowell Scientific School at Harvard. After a couple of years of postgraduate study at the Polytechnic school in Dresden, he came home in 1870, married,

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and took a position as hydrographic engineer in the New York dock department. Early in 1871, however, he wrote a story called "Love and Counter Love", and sold it to *Harper's Weekly*, and during subsequent months half a dozen or more of his stories appeared in various magazines. The next year, therefore, when his professional duties would have taken him on a canal-digging expedition to Central America, he washed his hands of engineering and applied himself to authorship. Returning to Dresden for a while, he settled in London in 1874 and remained for seven years, working on the regular staff of the *Spectator*, contributing to many other papers, and associating intimately with the leading literary personages of the time, as recorded in his entertaining reminiscences, *Shapes that Pass*, which appeared last year. Many of his books at this period were sold first to English publishers, or serialized first in English magazines; his third book, for instance, *Saxon Studies*, was contributed to the *Contemporary Review*, and the author had a lively fight to rescue it from the pirates in his native country.

Naturally, the books which he wrote under such circumstances were adapted particularly to the English taste. They competed with the later work of George Eliot and the early work of Thomas Hardy, with Blackmore, Black, and Besant. The settings were more often American than English, and the books had a peculiar interest for English readers. Many of his shorter stories never found a market in his own country at all, and even "Archibald Malmaison", which became one of his greatest successes when it eventually gained American publication, was steadily refused for five years after its appearance in England.

After 1882, when he came back to make his permanent home in America, a marked change showed itself in his work, but it never entirely lost the special traits of dual nationality. No other author, American or English, ever divided his early life so symmetrically between the two countries, or had such opportunities of knowing both intimately. With Julian Hawthorne the result was not merely assurance in the use of scenes and characters from both hemispheres, but a certain elusive detachment of outlook which would sadly baffle any reader seeking to determine from internal evidence which country he belonged to.

A second strongly formative influence on his work was undoubtedly the fame of his father. No sooner did he begin to publish than he learned that he would never be judged on his own merits. He was either condemned out of hand, on the assumption that he was trying to capitalize his relationship, or else he was measured solely by the criterion of his father's work. Good qualities were praised as survivals of the paternal genius, and anything which the critic disliked was branded as a pathetic lapse from the Hawthorne tradition. Each book was combed for resemblances to *The Scarlet Letter* or *The House of the Seven Gables*.

To seek protection from such unfair comments, Julian Hawthorne soon adopted a somewhat defiant manner. In all interviews and autobiographic essays he went out of his way to assert that he wrote for purely material objects, without either esthetic or ethical pretensions. His purpose was to make a living, and to do so he must please the ordinary public. He denied feeling any creative joy in his work, and boasted only of the physically strenuous achievements it entailed. He once wrote for twenty-six consecutive hours, and when he was working on *Fortune's Fool* his usual habit was to write from eight o'clock in the evening till sunrise. His second novel, *Idolatry*, was rewritten, wholly or in part, no less than seven times, but before long he came to consider his stories unworthy of stylistic care or painstaking revision. "I do not write better than I do," he declared, "because I have no ideas worth better clothes than they can pick up for themselves." The same defiant frankness appears in such a

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statement as this: "When *Garth* had run for a year or more in *Harper's Magazine*, with no signs of abatement, the publishers felt obliged to intimate that unless I put an end to their misery they would. Accordingly, I promptly gave Garth his quietus. The truth is, I was tired of him myself. With all his qualities and virtues he could not help being a prig . . . I never raised a character to the position of hero without recognizing in him, before I had done with him, an egregious ass". Whenever he was asked to contribute to some symposium on current topics, he would decline on the ground that his success at telling stories was no justification for giving advice or prophecy.

This attitude showed itself in his books, occasionally, in a wanton disregard of the critics' sensibilities. Fantastic supernatural phenomena in the midst of a realistic narrative, or painfully ugly and brutal behavior following a mild and idyllic introduction, aroused keen irritation in the logical minds of the critics, but Julian Hawthorne ignored their complaints. The more angrily they asserted that he was failing to rival his father, the more prolific he became in melodrama and horror.

Once established in the United States, he soon developed a genius for the spectacular, both in his books and in his personal actions. His biography of his father and mother, published in 1884, was condemned as undignified and in bad taste, because it included informal personal remarks and episodes, and indulged in colloquial and humorous comments. A couple of years later he discovered a new variant of the detective story, using the real experiences of a famous New York policeman, Inspector Byrnes. Out of ten books which he published within three years, 1887-1889, five were of this "true thriller" series, the best known being *The Great Bank Robbery, An American Penman,* and *Section 558 or The Fatal Letter.* About the same time he became involved in a squabble with the venerable James Russell Lowell over an article which he had written about him. Lowell wrote to the papers protesting that Hawthorne had quoted remarks which Lowell had not intended for publication, and Hawthorne replied that Lowell had known him to be a journalist and that the remarks in question had not seemed in any way confidential.

His attack on the literary censorship has been mentioned. Some of his arguments, although written in 1888, have a strangely modern application: "The real point at issue is not whether Zola's books are decent or indecent, but whether a government has a right to suppress indecent literature. And here I must state my conviction that they have no right whatever to say a word in the matter. No man should be restricted in his right to publish whatever he pleases; no publisher should be forbidden to sell (if he can) any book. Legislation against vice is folly, and has been since the beginning of laws. It is never successful; on the contrary, it always promotes what it seeks to suppress. The innocence of ignorance is impossible in this world; the only possible innocence is that of knowledge and volition. My conclusion is that corrupt freedom is better than enforced virtue—if so absurd a contradiction in terms can be admitted". Needless to say, such radical doctrine provoked much pious horror forty years ago.

His next exploit came when the Collier Publishing Company, after buying a story from him, changed it before publication, in the interests of propriety, by inserting a marriage where the author mentioned none. Chancing to read it in print, the author was annoyed, and wrote protesting that his name should not be attached to a story fundamentally changed from his. The editor's replies were so naïve that Hawthorne won a palpable victory by publishing the whole correspondence in the literary press.

During these active years he was usually attached to the staff of one or another New York newspaper, but in 1893 he removed his

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residence to Jamaica, and several seasons passed without a book bearing his name. Then a ten-thousand-dollar prize contest held by the New York *Herald* was won by Judith Hollinshed, with a novel called *A Fool of Nature*, and soon the admission came from Jamaica that Judith Hollinshed was Julian Hawthorne, and that the story had been written in nineteen days. Within a few months the Jamaican homestead was abandoned, and he was off to India as a special correspondent to investigate the famine and plague.

By the close of the nineteenth century, his career as a novelist was over. He devoted himself to histories of the United States and Spanish America, to compilations of classic short stories, to syndicated feature articles. But the strangest adventure of his career was yet to come. He had become associated with a company for developing mining properties in Northern Ontario, and in January 1912 he was indicted, along with the promoter and two fellow-directors, for misusing the mails by issuing a prospectus which was not fulfilled by the later output of the mines. The other directors were Josiah Quincy, a former under-secretary of state and twice mayor of Boston, and Dr. William James Morton, son of the discoverer of ether and himself a famous neurologist and inventor of the "Morton current" for the X-ray process. When the case eventually came to trial, much evidence was introduced to prove that the directors had acted in complete good faith, and had made no money by the promotions; nevertheless Hawthorne and Morton were sentenced to a year's imprisonment. On March 26, 1913, firmly asserting their innocence, the two famous sons of famous fathers, both sixty-eight years of age, entered Atlanta Penitentiary.

Julian Hawthorne confronted the new experience with lively interest. On the day he entered he became editor of the prison paper, *Good Words*, and he contributed to it a great variety of material, ranging from poetry to refutations of Lombroso's physiognomical theories. Upon his release, in October, 1913, he strongly condemned conditions in the prison, and proceeded to embody his observations in a book entitled *The Subterranean Brotherhood*, a forcible contribution to the agitation for penal reform. He also resumed his work as a writer of reviews and feature articles, which has continued with unabated energy until the present.

His place in American literature has never been intelligently considered. His first works were regarded with preconceived opinions based on his father's reputation, and later he was subjected to other prejudices, arising out of his forcible opinions, his professed commercialism, his fecundity and versatility. Later, when a truer perspective might have been expected with the ceasing of professional competition and its attendant jealousies, the literary fashion had so changed that Julian Hawthorne and his contemporaries, except three or four Titans, were not evaluated at all, but were ignored as outmoded. Now, perhaps, it is time for him to emerge from that inevitable limbo through which every writer must pass between current acclaim and secure historic recognition.

His only books to have retained a steady position are his biographical studies, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, published in 1884, and *Hawthorne and His Circle*, twenty years later. Now, after another quarter-century, has come a third to put beside them, *Shapes that Pass*. The first draws a vivid and detailed picture of Nathaniel Hawthorne with particular attention to his home life and his wife's influence; the second sketches his relations with the other interesting people of his time, both at home and in England; while the third gives a similar survey of English literary men a few years later, when the son was received into the writing fraternity of London.

The manner and method of these books are agreeable; intimate glimpses of private life, touches of irony in character delineation,

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lack of reverence in allusions to celebrities, all the qualities which grieved the readers of the first book, have come to be regarded as virtues. The titles are enough to show that he avoided the dulness of an official "Life and Letters". On the other hand, he was skilful in handling the difficulties inherent in his relationship to the subject: he did not display unthinking adulation, yet he contrived to indicate a genuine sympathy and admiration for his father which implies credit to both of them. Similarly, his recent reminiscences could not be more self-effacing: he tells little about his own achievements and ideas, he does not record what he said to Browning or Swinburne nor any flattering remarks which they made to him; he brings them all to very human life without parade of the showman.

In any estimate of his literary significance, however, these books must be set aside; and along with them should go *Saxon Studies* —a pleasant record of his Dresden days, sometimes showing kinship with *Innocents Abroad* in its shrewd touches, but free from the responsibility of being persistently comic —and *Confessions and Criticisms*, an assemblage of the comments which made him spectacular, and sometimes unpopular, when they appeared in the Reviews of the eighties. So-called "creative writing" has to be the final basis of permanent literary values, so the eventual reputation of Julian Hawthorne must depend on his works of fiction.

Their chief importance in literary history will probably be that they reflect with remarkable clearness an important transition which affected the whole of human life and thought everywhere, and in the United States with particular intensity. The concluding third of the nineteenth century witnessed the triumph of the scientific spirit over all adversaries. Science, both theoretical and applied, having become the determining influence in daily life and in methods of thought, inevitably pierced to the very foundations of literature. Theoretical science showed itself not merely in the immediate controversy of dogmatic religion and agnostic materialism, but also in the application of scientific methods to the observing of human character and human relationships, with the resulting new sciences of psychology and sociology; applied science began to replace the "crusted characters" and "local color" of the old dispensation with the standardized types developed by mass-production of commodities and by easy travel.

Since it was not humanly possible for anyone to perceive how comprehensive the revolution was to be, the instinctive efforts to harmonize the new outlook with the old were bound to cause contradiction and paradox. In Julian Hawthorne's novels the struggle to assimilate the new elements without rejecting the old is plainly visible in many directions.

Primarily, it would seem, he was a devotee of the Gothic romanticism which, after culminating in England with Scott, Byron, and their contemporaries, had crossed the Atlantic and found a second blooming in Poe, to say nothing of playing an important rôle, in spite of the repressions imposed by Brook Farm transcendentalism, in the work of Hawthorne the elder. Its distinguishing features are to be discerned in every one of the younger Hawthorne's novels, and not as superficial trimmings but always innate in the very heart of the story. Chief of these traits are fondness for the supernatural and the horrible, violence in the depiction of uncontrolled emotional frenzy, selection of a hero who is a superman in physique, intellect, and passion, and indulgence in what Ruskin dubbed the "pathetic fallacy" of natural phenomena as responsive to human moods. Admitting that these elements were largely responsible for his popularity with the circulating-library public, which is always romantic in its tastes, one yet must hesitate to suggest that he chose them for that reason, for they are handled with gusto and often seem to be the very embryo of the plot.

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On the other hand, he clearly recognized and admired the new tendencies. He championed the naturalism of Zola and his colleagues; he was personally acquainted with Meredith, Hardy and other English writers of the new dispensation, and was writing in competition with them; he hailed the superiority of James and Howells among his own compatriots. The whole method and outlook in his books were consistent with this radicalism: he devoted much space to analysis of psychological problems, placing heavy emphasis on sex; he admitted material which would have been condemned as ugly, sordid, or indelicate by his fastidious predecessors; he enjoyed the accumulation of familiar commonplace detail; and he introduced earnest discussions of the ethical and social problems which the situations implied. In all of these respects he was an enthusiastic disciple of the changed world.

The result was that he did not fully satisfy any faction. The prudish censured him for immodesty, as when the *Nation* said of his first book: "'Psychical analysis' is, we believe, the name that is given to the exceedingly distasteful quality which marks *Bressant* and which is to be found in many French novels of various grades. . . . It is a very bad thing because it lacks decency. In the place of a genuine study of human beings it gives us a morbid fingering of unclean emotions. After an experience of many centuries, society has agreed that there are certain subjects which shall not be talked about". This blast was called forth by the fact that the story investigated a youth in love with two girls at the same time. His second novel, *Idolatry*, annoyed the London *Athenæum* by suggesting, though not actually presenting, the theme of incest: "There are passages a woman should hardly read aloud". Four years later the same journal called *Sebastian Strome* "worse than painful" because it began with the hero seducing a servant-girl and proceeded with the heroine marrying a pervert; and after another six years we find the *Critic*, in discussing *Love —or a Name*, applying the favorite *cliché* of prudery: "The reader lays down the book in disgust. Mr. Hawthorne throws an implied slur on what is supposed to be respectable young womanhood as a class. . . . It is merely a book to leave an unpleasant taste in the mouth".

On the other hand, the more advanced critics complained of the fanciful supernatural touches, the premonitions, second sight, ancestral curses, and so forth, that appeared in almost every book. The *Saturday Review* found in *Bressant* "a superstitious element of what we may call magnetico-mesmerico-spiritualism which, to our mind, is very silly". Of *Garth*, in an otherwise favorable review, the *Atlantic Monthly* declared, "He could do better if he would not encumber himself with so much legendary matter. He has made his tradition so florid, and his reproduction of the past in the present so obvious, that he comes to the verge of destroying verisimilitude". The same magazines disliked *Dust* because the action at several points turned on the clairvoyance of the heroine, and *Fortune's Fool* because the hero was suddenly able to play the banjo without previous training. Similar objections were raised against many of the other books.

Meanwhile, the devotees of romance and fantasy complained that the supernatural phenomena were injured by too close a contact with familiar realistic details, as when the dying heroine of *Bressant* sent out her spirit in pursuit of the hero and found him in a train in which "the brakeman came in, took the poker and opened the stove door with it, peeped into the red-hot interior a moment, grasped a solid chunk of wood from the pile, and popped it in cleverly". *Idolatry*, the most fantastic of all his stories, was full of enchanted rings and Egyptian necromancy and avenging thunderbolts, yet the Nilotic temple of horrors was situated on the Hudson, and the action occurred in such places as the Tremont House, the Beacon Hill

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Bank in School Street and the *Empire State* steamboat. The more sentimental romance readers were cheated of happy endings in some of the stories, such as *Fortune's Fool*, which closed with the chief male character being murdered under the stage of a burning theatre while the heroine committed suicide on the stage above by playing Cleopatra with what was practically a real live asp. In general, the brutality of the villains throughout the books was recounted with a relish which made the tender-minded squirm, although the addicts of blood-and-thunder melodrama grumbled that they had to plod through too much meticulous analysis in order to reach the thrills. In short, the only stories of Julian Hawthorne to win anything like universal approbation were those of that indeterminate length, longer than short stories but shorter than novelettes, in which the mixing of incongrous ingredients was not apparent. Tales of abnormality and horror, like "Archibald Malmaison", and of crime and detection, like "Mrs. Gainsborough's Diamonds", evoked a unanimous praise never accorded to the long novels.

Every one of his outstanding traits can be readily traced to the conflict between Gothic romanticism and scientific naturalism. His heroes, with their defiance of convention, their potentialities for great evil as well as great good, their frenzied inward conflicts, are in the authentic succession from Byron, but they are not portrayed merely as superhuman monsters. Every element of heredity and environment, every subconscious byway, is explored. The phenomenon of genius particularly fascinated him: the hero of *Garth* is a painter, of *Dust* a poet, of *Fortune's Fool* a sculptor, and the heroine of *Beatrix Randolph* a singer. Most of these geniuses are introspective and temperamental, so the author has full opportunity of anatomizing them. Other psychological problems are equally prominent in other books. The hero of *Bressant* is shown at the age of twenty-three, the product of an experimental education which has made him a physical and intellectual prodigy but kept him entirely ignorant of love, and the story is devoted to his sexual awakening. The hero of *Sebastian Strome* is a fanatical seeker for absolute truth, who goes through all the throes of sin, crime, and religious infidelity, and emerges triumphant by reason of inward integrity. Byronic though all these beings may be, they are decked out in the livery of Comte and Dalton.

Then again, his handling of the supernatural lacks the pristine assurance of the Gothic tale of terror, from Mrs. Radcliffe to Poe. The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the first invasion of mesmerists, mediums, mahatmas, who are still with us, having brought the practice of black magic up to date by investing it with a technical vocabulary and expounding it in abstruse treatises. In short, even superstition had to follow the new fashion and become scientific. Julian Hawthorne, therefore, whenever he introduced an apparition or a spell or a curse into his story, felt impelled to comment upon it in the best scientific terminology. The *Saturday Review* remarked, "A broomstick pure and simple, an old hag riding on it, and her black cat, we might perhaps stand; but the laws of the mysterious processes of a broomstick are too much for us".

Another great change which came over the novelists during the nineteenth century was their discovery of their influence over the public mind. Where their predecessors had been content to entertain with a good story, satisfied if they aroused laughter, shudders, or tears, as the case might be, the Victorian writers felt a solemn duty to turn this power to higher things. Whether in preaching morality, or propagating social theory, or suggesting some philosophical interpretation of existence, nearly all the major novelists were using their stories for ulterior purposes, and Julian Hawthorne caught the infection. No matter how romantically bizarre and in-

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tensified his stories might be, he was always ready to expatiate on current social or intellectual problems. The familiar paraphernalia of dastardly villains and angelic heroines, of diguised benefactors and exchanged infants and missing wills, must have felt astonished to find themselves so unwontedly sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. Even *Idolatry*, in which of all his books the romantic traits of wonder and escape from actuality were most fully developed, was an intermittent allegory of the soul's ordeal, accompanied by arguments about the necessity of sin, and so on. *Garth* is concerned with the relationship of art and morality, and *Sebastian Strome* plunges into the greatest controversy of its era, the free-for-all between religious faith and scientific agnosticism.

Were it only for the insight which they give us into the mental transition from which our present epoch emerged, Julian Hawthorne's novels would repay the attention of modern readers; but in addition they have intrinsic merits to recommend them. There is a sort of primitive vigor about them, a contagious joy in physical action and the exercise of the senses. The ideas are positive and individual, the events are stirring, the characterization boldly impressionistic. The literary style, while uneven in some of the more rapidly written books, is seldom without a touch of distinction, and frequently rises to real beauty. His robust virility is very unlike what we usually associate with the Victorian era, and yet there is a certain indefinable guilelessness, a hint of fairy tales and make-believe, in even his most morbid episodes, which offer a charming contrast to the conscientious sophistication of today.

Many characteristics which the writing profession now cultivates—avoidance of hierarchic pretension, admission that the financial returns of an author's work have some significance to him, assumption that an author may experiment with any subject and method he pleases—can be traced back to Julian Hawthorne. He had to parry many of the blows which innovation provokes. He helped to carry American literature through an awkward age, and to maintain its reputation both at home and abroad. Deserving respect for his energy, determination, and versatility, he asks for it no more in his eighty-fourth year than he ever asked for it before, and that is all the better reason why it should be accorded him.

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THE POETRY OF BOLSHEVISM

by Elizabeth Shaw

Out of suffering, poetry is born. Small wonder then that Russia, in the midst of a vast social upheaval and readjustment, should have a resurgence of poetry and song. New forms, new ideas, and a spiritual defiance as powerful as that which accompanied "The Marseillaise"—these are the by-products of the epochal days of Russian history since those tragic beginnings thirteen years ago. To study this new and defiant poetry and to meet some of its authors was the purpose that sent me to the former land of the Czars.

In semi-deserted Leningrad, that "city of the dead", I discovered that poetry flourished no better than business or politics, for amid the ghostly remains of that once great city on the Neva, only writers of sonnets and rhymed couplets and "other corrupt and decayed verse forms" lived, and that the poetical fires of the country really blaze in Moscow.

When I reached there a most engaging young Russian girl was appointed as my guide and interpreter. Vera was energetic, dominating, eager to help, yet always in the direction of presenting Bolshevism in its most favorable light. She brought me stacks of books of poetry, glowing over their beauties and dwelling on passages that "corrected my capitalistic errors". I was trapped like all the other American visitors, and like them, resented it. Vera and I often differed sharply and, two or three times, all but came to open rows in public. Nevertheless, I am compelled to admit that I could never have covered the ground without her help. Contact with her youthful, glowing personality was, moreover, the most human aspect of my visit.

With Vera by my side, I reviewed the stream of poetry written since the beginning of the Revolution. Most of all, I was impressed by the quantity of the lyric output of the country. The bookstores we visited were piled high with volumes of the new verse. Poetry societies everywhere numbered thousands of members. Radios in the streets blared forth the new songs; soldiers sang them as they marched to their barracks; school children were memorizing the new verse. Wherever two or three gathered together, in a bare room, a dingy cafe, on third-class trains or crowded Volga boats, they lifted their voices in song. Russians, always known for their love of music, were now expressing this love in that form of art which combines music and a verbal account of one's deeper emotions.

The emotional substance of Russia's revolutionary poetry is reduced to one theme: Long live Bolshevism! The only overtone I was able to detect was: Down with everything that isn't Bolshevistic! There is nothing astonishing in the discovery that revolutionary poetry should be rebellious, but the rigid, universal, masterful exploitation of the lyric cry of the Slavic people for the government's purposes is something at which to marvel. Nothing in Russia today has been so success-

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fully nationalized as have her poets. Every one of the seeming thousands of poets in the Soviet Union is a herald of the new régime.

One exception proved more than a rule. A well-known writer of "good proletarian verse", Ivan Moltchanov, submitted a poem, entitled "Rendez-Vous", to *Pravda*. The editors, apparently hard-driven, failed to study the poem carefully, and immediately after its publication, the official world was in an uproar. This is the fatal poem:

Dawn and the sunset fire
Glow and then fade,
Trees spread their lace-like fans
Shadowing the glade.

Day and then night revolve,
Bloom and cruel frost;
Dear, you are by my side,
Near and yet lost.

Pale as the deadened moon,
Sadly you plead;
Pardon my halting words—
Know then my need,

Need for the peaceful hours
Under blue sky
After the painful years
That crucify

Heart and flesh of me,
Trouble my dream,
Need for this vivid love
Bright as hope's gleam.

She is as fair, as sweet
As spring's fragrant earth;
I sing new songs to her
Through my re-birth.

Beneath her two straight brows
Burn her dark eyes,
The whiteness of her hands
Pale snow defies.

This girl is made for love,
Songs and caress;
You yearn for factory work,
Life's storm and stress.

Dawn and the sunset fire
Fade and then glow;
I have a rendez-vous—
Dear, I must go!

Even with allowances made for an imperfect translation, these verses, as poetry or as rebellion, are not very astonishing. The young author simply confesses that, after tortured years, peace and love and beauty are irresistible. Heart-troubled yet helpless, he says farewell to the factory worker, grimed with "life's storm and stress", and goes to meet the springlike loveliness, the snow-whiteness of one "made for love". Yet slight as it was, this poem sufficed to ostracize its author. Bezymensky described him as one not fit to be spoken to or touched; he was jeered at and derided by everyone. Gorky likened the attacks to the "snappings of a mad dog", and while lamenting the young man's relapse into "bourgeois sentiment and bad taste", tried to explain the error as due to his unhappy childhood, his suffering as a soldier, his early nourishment on "sorrow and gunpowder".

More bitter, Leopold Auerbach proclaimed Moltchanov a rebel, a traitor to the Proletariat, unworthy to be a member of *Komsomol* (the young communists). "This is a real danger," he wrote, "and must be put down at once. The disgrace of a Proletarian's being fed up with the Revolution and desiring a commoner's life! The thought of Moltchanov's good-bye to the girl and the factory are beyond words!"

No line of Moltchanov's will ever be printed again, it is said, for he is in utter disgrace throughout Russia. Yet there must be thousands of young men in the Soviet Union, and even in the select and holy Communist Party, who feel that the Revolution and Civil War are events of the past and should be relegated to oblivion, that blue skies and dainty girls should again be allowed a place, at least in one's dreams. But although this controversy has blown over now, no poet dares to breathe such thoughts again. Riders of Pegasus in Russia have to be licensed, and

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woe to those who are unlucky enough to receive a ticket!

So successful is the censorship of poetry in Russia that her poets are not only prevented from publishing anything but propaganda; they are afraid even to admit that they would like to write anything else. Or is it true that, with the single exception of Moltchanov, every one of the thousands of poets in Russia is heart and soul for the communistic cause? During my whole stay in Russia, it was impossible for me to discover whether any of this poetry of propaganda was being written under compulsion or as commercial hack work.

In my enthusiasm for penetrating to the soul of this world of new poetry, I may have missed the most portentous fact of all—that it has no soul. Its sheer quantity, the artificial stimulus given its production, and the revelation that most of it is, as poetry, quite terrible, favor this view. Into the ears of his fellow leaders (now his successors in power), the great Lenin dinned his historic adjuration: "Educate the masses!" Undoubtedly Russia's poets, along with her scientists, have been rigorously mobilized for this purpose. Be this as it may, I say now and here to my Russian friends that I went among them, not, as they believed, spying into their secret purposes, but candidly curious to find what there might be of originality, truth and beauty in the pages of their poets.

Surely the greatest merit of Russia's revolutionary poetry is its quality of fresh, naïve, yet robust enthusiasm for the new order. Virility such as is found in many of them could not conceivably emanate from wholly "subsidized" souls. Most of these verses have been loosely called "modernistic" because of their scorn for the formal patterns of rhyme and rhythm; but modernism as we find it in the poems of writers like the Sitwells, Sandburg, Ezra Pound, and Amy Lowell, connotes more than is found in any of the Russian poetry of today. Modernistic verse still clings to some principles of rhythm and, fundamentally, is still dedicated to the expression of beauty—in the case of Amy Lowell's poetry, to beauty and little else. Russian poetry, however, is dedicated to nothing and is responsible for nothing except unreflectively to utter a cry of joy that the old ways are ended and the new are begun. Primitive is a better adjective for it than modern. The songs of rebellion read to me seemed to bring again the vivid, harsh sword-strokes of some of the old Anglo-Saxon epics written in the beginning of our race.

Here is an example taken from the epilogue of the book of verse called *"Good!"*, by Mayakovsky, of whom I shall speak later. He was an extreme modernist and one of the editors of the *New Left*. This poem celebrates the October Revolution of 1917:

Over the Russian earth
I wander
And find that life is good;
On this street
Which twists like a snake
Stands my house;
And here are shops
In whose yawning windows
Are displayed
Wines and fruit
Veiled from flies,
Also large cheeses.
The lamps are shining,
The prices are reduced,
And life is good.
I gaze into a show window
And see many books;
There's my name
On the headline.
How splendid
That the power of my brain
Works only for my republic!
The deputies
From the council
In the red building
Are riding by;
How the dust stirs
From their automobiles!
My gun is yellow
And the Red Army protects me;
When they point to the right

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I go to the right
And all is good.
Sky is above me,
Sky like blue silk;
Never was life
So very good!

"On Lenin's Death" is one of the most popular and successful poems written since the revolt; its author, Alexander Jaroff, is a leader of the younger group of poets. In my opinion, this poem is the greatest written in Russia since Blok's "The Twelve" was published:

Cyclones seething,
Earthquakes splitting the land,
Groaning aloud, cry
That Lenin is gone!
The winds sigh
That Lenin is dead!
Ah, sun, stand
With your arms of gold
Quite still! It is said
Lenin is dead
And his fiery heart is cold.
Listen, world!
The gardener is gone,
And flowers with their petals curled
Will shrivel and die
In the garden alone.
Listen, world!
The god, Lenin, that moved
Your machines and fired
Your foundries is still;
It was at his will
That you stirred;
Now you lie dead
As your god is dead.
Over the silent fields
Is heard a strange sound—
The muzhik weeping
As he never wept before;
Those who are sleeping
Now awake to adore
Their god; the fields
Shake with the sound
Of their grief. Know then
That he lives!
For again and again
He gives
Them life of his life.
Through the thunder and strife
At the cry of his death
He will give them breath
Of his breath, evermore.

These translations are by no means so effective as the originals. In the latter there is a declamatory smoothness, a certain alliterative magic that no English rendition could capture. The Russian tongue, indeed, is so much more flexible than the English that it is easy to believe, with some Russian critics, that any English poem can be put effectively into Russian, but no good Russian poem can be translated without loss into English.

With all the old ideals of beauty of form and substance gone, what is there left for inspiration? The most eloquent answer to this question came from the lips of Alexander Bezymensky himself, whom Trotsky described as "flesh of the revolution's flesh", but whom the people call "best-beloved".

One morning he called on me at my hotel. The room was not small, yet he seemed to dwarf it. Fully six feet, broad-shouldered, he walked forward to take my hand with a stride that indicated the kind of dynamic energy that, focused in one direction, seems to produce the leaders of the world. Above his beautiful profile with its high forehead, straight nose, small moustache, full lips, aggressive chin, he wore his light brown hair rather long and brushed carelessly back. His red cheeks contrasted strangely with the blue-black shaven line of the jaw below. His costume was a gray suit with a white tennis shirt open at the neck.

The sight of him reminded me of his great influence, and my challenge reflected the gaiety from his own spirit: "What do you think is the greatest thing in the world?"

"To be a Bolshevist!" he cried, extending his arms in exultation. Then he added, quietly enough: "But I never could have existed without the Revolution which has brought me freedom from care, inspiration and recognition. From the time I was eight years old I have written poetry, but none was printed.

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My first volume of collected verse appeared in 1926. You don't understand what our suffering has been; you wouldn't believe how hungry we were, my wife and I. We could endure that, like the rest, but when it came to watching our boy starve—! One day my wife stole three potatoes for him, and I couldn't say a word; I was glad. All that is changed now; we are happy and free. Russia laughs while she works."

"And for inspiration?" I put in, tentatively.

"Some poets say they write best in the peace of the country, but it's not that way with me. I go from factory to factory and write there. All of our poets have their poems printed first in the factory papers."

"You've had many books published. Can you tell me how many copies have been sold?"

The answer came quickly, but very modestly: "Four hundred and eighty-seven thousand".

Bezymensky is the head of the new Proletarian School. I have his word that the Poetry Society of Moscow numbers three thousand members and that organizers from its membership are sent out over the country to initiate other poetry-writing groups.

For several hours, we talked about poetry and poets. His idea of poetical form is that there isn't any: you must say what you have in your heart. He recited quite eloquently several of his own poems to illustrate his point. His idea of what makes a poet is sentimental enough to be quite Victorian:

"Every being is born a poet. He may not write, but he is one just the same. Consequently, I feel that even the man who is making bread is a poet. Inspiration is the joy of creation. A note of music, a word, or any small thing, may start a poem for me. Since I am a social worker and very busy, it may be days before I have a free moment; but my memory is good, and I never forget once the poem has come. I feel that among the French writers, Verlaine, and of the United States, Walt Whitman and Edgar Allan Poe, have had the greatest influence on Russian literature."

He asked many questions about American poetry and poets—who are the greatest poets, and what form of verse do they adopt? Do all magazines and newspapers publish poetry and, as a rule, how much is paid? Are poets very wealthy? Do they sell thousands of their books?

Bezymensky spent some time looking through poetry magazines I had with me, noting the form in which the poems were written. When he came to the pages of sonnets, he frowned and hurriedly passed them over. Two of his photographs and several volumes of his poems were lying on my desk. When he saw them, he smiled and wrote his name across the photographs, then on the flyleaf of *The Heart Human*, after thinking a moment, he wrote:

> We love life
> In order to conquer it.
> Nothing in the world
> Can keep us from
> Our victory.

In the midst of writing, Bezymensky held up his fountain pen for me to look at, saying, with a provocative smile: "The only American thing about me".

American and British policies were touched upon with disastrous results. Immediately that beautiful and placid forehead was furrowed by a threatening frown, and an angry light flashed in the gray eyes, so I quickly steered him to lunch. In the small restaurant on the third floor of the hotel I ordered cocktails, wine and the nicest dishes from that very meagre menu. After the caviar, things were serene again, although when we touched wine glasses and I said, "To poetry", he sternly added, "Bolshevism!"

He gave me four hours of a busy day, "because I can tell from your eyes that you love poetry". Several times he encouraged me: "Ask me any questions you wish"; then waited for me to finish my notes.

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Bezymensky marked certain poems in his volumes for translation into English. "The Blow", one of those marked, explains his ominous frown when England was mentioned. I will quote one stanza:

Forward, forward! We see the broadness of China.
The weapons of insurrection and struggle are clinking.
The fields of our hearts are sowed with pain
Upon which falls the living rain of our holy wrath
For near by, in the armor of dreadnaughts and troops,
Stirring with hands of cannons like an octopus
Britannia is standing, is spitting fire and steel
And paying with gold for the dirt of treason. . . .
Under your boot, Britannia, there is a bit of breath
Left in the oppressed bodies of slaves.
Eh, Britannia! Clean up with an eight-inch shell
The stuffed holes of your ears
So you may hear the gentle and caressing word:
Britannia! Curses on thee!

This poem is, through its whole five pages, the present-day Russian's conception of England:

Britannia—the enslaver of the world!
Britannia—she is our grim foe. . . .

Britannia of outrageous violences
Britannia of rascals and murderers. . . .

In Bezymensky's poem, "Peter Smorodin", we find what is supposed to be the spirit of the youth of Russia today. It begins with the lines:

We won't celebrate, we will show
The world what the foundry coins.
We will show
That thousands speak through this boy;
This is the song of the Communists
And the steel Bolshevist race. . . .

He chooses Peter, the hero, as the representative of all Russian youth. This is the story of a boy, oppressed beneath the "lifting of the whip" and "subjected to prison labor", of a boy who at the age of fifteen was drinking vodka, yet at the same time was stealing books to gain some education "who, not having eaten for three days, would still give his crust to a friend". Then came the Revolution. Peter dedicated himself to the cause and was made a leader.—

Now with flaming speech
He stirs up the whole world.
A moment, and rifle on shoulder
He is commander of regiment . . .
They beat the white guards;
A moment, and the foundry is in flames;
A moment, and he is shouting
Over the Komsomol ditch.
Into the army of youth
Is pouring the Bolshevist blood.

Another poem he marked is entitled "Hatred". The spirit of this poem is revealed by two lines which Bezymensky quoted:

Enough we have loved our enemies,
We wish to hate them now.

Such is the "new poetry" of Russia; such are the violent winds that fan into flames the sparks of devotion to the new order! Studying the vivid face of this poet as he declaimed his lines, I asked myself again and again if here before me sat only an instrument vibrating to the growing steely clamors in Russia. Was he a new-age Walt Whitman or the Soviet Union's best protagonist for propaganda?

It grew late in the afternoon, and, although he had broken one engagement, the second had to be kept. Bezymensky pushed back his chair, rose to his full six feet, tucked his cloth cap under his arm, and, clicking his heels together, clasped both my hands, bowing low over them: "This has been a great pleasure," he said gravely, "and I wish I might stay longer. Do write to me, and please send me some books of American poetry." He opened my door, turned toward me again, and inclining his head, departed.

No sooner had the door closed than I heard him break into song. His voice rang through the narrow hallway, a voice clear, rich, vi-

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brant. Listening, I picked up his volume of *The Heart Human*. I turned to the title-page and read: "We love life in order to conquer it". Surely this man had many weapons with which to conquer life. But then, as the sonorous voice died away, I found myself puzzled by his lines. Conquering is the volitional, the aggressive thing, not love. Surely we come nearer conquering life in order to love. Conquering life *is* loving it. The illusion of the great vital revolutionary poet was gone, struggle as I did to hold the magnetism of his presence. The magic of his volumes, as I gathered them up, seemed to depart.

Not all Soviet Russia's poets write lyrics good for the morale of her factories. Samuel Marshak, one of the most noted and best liked, is the La Fontaine of the revolution. On a cold morning in Leningrad I was driven through whirlwinds of blinding dust, along many shabby, deserted streets, to the one called Pestelja, where Marshak lives. Up three flights of dark stairs, I saw his nameplate over the bell.

I rang. Innumerable bolts were shot back, the door opened, and there stood my host, smiling, with both hands extended. I stepped within a shadowy hall and watched him turn and bolt the door again. "My overcoat and hat were stolen last week, so now I am being very careful," he explained in excellent English. "Locking the stable after the horse is gone, you see. Come to my library."

There were a large table diagonally across one corner, several comfortable chairs, and thousands of books along the four walls, clear up to the ceiling. "What a glorious room to work in!" I exclaimed. "Is there anything nicer than books?"

"Nothing, except children," and he held up his hand for me to listen to his own, laughing and playing in the next room.

Marshak is rather stockily built and of medium height. His face is smooth, while his thick, brown hair bristles all over his head. His kindly brown eyes peer out through steel-rimmed spectacles.

"Tell me about American poetry," he asked as soon as he had seated me in a comfortable chair and lighted my cigarette and his own. "I am keenly interested in American writers and long for the time to come when all your books will be in our bookshops."

In view of what I had learned in that grim country, this request had a humorous aspect. But in the same spirit I replied that I'd be glad to send over volumes of American poetry.

At my earnest request, he brought out some of his poems. Each one is separately printed in a large paper book with gay covers, and with charming illustrations on every page.—

ABOUT SILLY MOUSE

A mouse sang at night in her hole:
"Sleep, my baby, be still!
I'll give you some bread and the whole
Of a candle to eat your fill."

Silly mouse answers her mother:
"Your voice is too thin and high;
You had better get me another
Nurse to sing lullaby."

Mother mouse runs to find
A brown duck to be nurse;
"Please, auntie duck, be kind
And sing my baby a verse."

Auntie duck sings to mouse:
"Ga-ga, my little one, rest!
In the garden behind the house
I'll find you a worm, the best."

Silly mouse whines in the dark
In a drowsy, querulous tone:
"Your voice falls short of the mark,
It's too loud—now leave me alone!"

The mother mouse finds a toad, a pig, a horse, each of which in turn vainly utters for lullaby its characteristic sound, but the silly mouse is satisfied only with a cat's gentle "Miau-miau" and so falls asleep—to wake no more. Undoubtedly, this poem is cruel, but so are many of our own fairy tales.

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Other poems among Marshak's books are more in the tradition of verses for children. Does Marshak, consciously or unconsciously, evade the literary edicts of the communists by writing for children? I cannot tell. This gentle, kindly soul sits in the peace of his library, writing his jingles for Soviet children, who are not yet of an age to assume the responsibilities of digesting Soviet propaganda.

Devices other than writing for children are used by Russian poets today to evade expending themselves in the strident, narrow cause of subsidized political education. Shershen'evich, the imagist, being something of an experimenter, has absorbed himself in proving that poetry need say nothing at all, or at least need have no narrative coherence. "A poem is not an organism," he states in his booklet on verse writing, "but a heaping up of images, any one of which can be removed without loss, just as twenty new ones may be introduced. . . . A book ought to be readable backwards as successfully as the other way round."

Vladimir Mayakovsky, the Caucasian, was another iconoclast. His specialty, in the most flamboyantly modern verse, was to "socialize rage and skull-smashing". Unable to criticize his government, he mocked at his fellow poets, as in "Jubilee", when he says Cherasimov, Kirilov, and Rodov form a "colorless landscape"; Yesenin causes "laughter like a cow in kid gloves"; and Bezymensky is "nothing but carrot coffee".

Bagritzky, in his glamorous pages of *A Thought About Opanas*, gives us a stirring epic on the Civil War in the Ukraine.

Yesenin's voice was first heard in 1916, but he did not identify himself with any group, following the Tolstoy tradition and writing mostly for the peasants and of rural life.

I did not meet Utkin and Jaroff, the leaders and most important poets of the younger group in Russia today, but many friends of mine there who knew them well discussed them with me for hours. Utkin records the fighting of battles, the farewell of the soldier, the casualties of war, and the glory of military service. Utkin and Jaroff, close friends, look rather alike, each with his shock of thick, black hair, clean-shaven face, soulful eyes and sensitive mouth. They are about the same age, not more than twenty-six.

I have already quoted Jaroff's poem on Lenin's death. An equally popular one of his is called "Garmon", the Russian word for accordion. The poem is the story of a Communist boy in a village, who, through his music on an accordion, purifies the peasants and stirs them to patriotic fervor.

Now to return to Vladimir Mayakovsky. This flamboyant mouthpiece of "red" propaganda and patriotism, the pride of communist youth, and the idol of all Soviet Russia, in the early morning hours of April 14, 1930, shot himself in the breast and died on his way to the hospital. The world, including all of Moscow, asked why? How could the most vivid exponent of Bolshevism betray one of the chief laws of the Marxist code? "Suicide is unpardonable . . . a desertion before the enemy . . . a sentimental weakness unworthy of a Bolshevist fighter." And was it not Mayakovsky, himself, who in 1925, in one of his famous poems, mocked Serge Yesenin for "quitting" by hanging himself?

For three days, in the Writers' Club, the body lay in state with a military guard of honor, while half a million people paid their final tribute to him. Ironically quiet he lay there on his red catafalque while thousands passed slowly by. His voice was silent, the voice that, for over thirteen years, had shouted and sung the Bolshevist dogmas, and there was no answer to the oft-repeated why, why? He left a note: "It isn't a brave way to go out for a revolutionist, but there is no other way out and I can stand it no longer. The best legacy I can leave you is my hope you are going to help to build a better world".

Last spring, in an editorial from one of the leading New York newspapers one of Mos-

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cow's principal literary journals proposed that all novelists, poets and playwrights shall be nationalized. In my estimation this has been practically the case for the last twelve years.

I remember my last hours in Moscow as I stood in the dingy entrance hall of the hotel and talked with Mayakovsky; I remember his height—over six feet, his breadth of shoulders, his stern mouth, stiff, closely cropped hair and brilliant eyes. Such a vivid, compelling personality, such power and genius! I can hear his voice still. In one of his poems he said:

> I will sew black trousers for myself
> Out of the velvet of my voice.

He was primarily an artist, and, before he was twenty, was considered one of the most brilliant students at the Academy of Arts in Moscow, excelling in caricatures and portrait painting. Because of his rough exterior, his boisterous manner and his declamatory fierceness, he was likened by some to a prize-fighter or "an impudent highwayman". But I firmly believe that this was simply a Bolshevik masquerade and beneath it all was a man, extremely sensitive and on fire with genius. Now what effect would the last thirteen years have on such a man, especially when he suppressed all these desires of his spirit? "There is no other way out and I can stand it no longer"—his own written words.

The question arising in my mind is whether a nation has any right to nationalize men of genius, to state that there shall be no creation except that which glorifies communism—in other words, pure and simple propaganda. In the vast mechanization which is going on in Soviet Russia today, should all form of art be seized and used as grist for the mill? Does this not, inevitably, ruin any possible flowering of the artist's brain?

In its rigid, universal, and masterful exploitation, the Soviet ideal of Utopia is something to marvel at. But why must the government today dictate this circumscribed path for all artists in Soviet Russia? Fundamentally the people are of an Eastern race and, for generations, a passionate love of music and art has been in their very life-blood. As a foreign diplomat said to Walter Duranty a short time ago, "You can't change the Russian soul in thirteen years".

Now that it is all over, after many hours in the company of Bezymensky and other prominent Russian poets, I do not know whether the story I tell concerns a great literary movement or the most stupendous and amazing campaign of propaganda the world has ever seen.

A most scientific and careful observer admits in his "Impressions"—"Accurate information is hard to come by; . . . one finds questions evaded in an embarrassed way". Theodore Dreiser says in his book on Russia "The Government has a political theory to establish and blindly, although practically enough, seeks to subsidize . . . if not enslave the arts to its service". Dorothy Thompson states in *The New Russia* that it is "a land of the most amazing contradictions", and Anne O'Hare McCormick, in *The Hammer and the Scythe*, finds "nothing in Russia is fixed enough to hang a judgment on", and "Russia becomes vaguer and darker the nearer you approach". How can one hope to solve this vast and absorbing enigma?

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A MONTH OF THE THEATRE

KATHARINE CORNELL, MARIKA COTOPOULI, AND CHARLIE CHAPLIN

by Francis Fergusson

A few months ago I pointed out how La Argentina, Angna Enters and Ruth Draper, finding no theatre to attach themselves to, had worked out one-woman theatres of their own. Stars who stage themselves in congenial rôles, not for the sake of the play or the rôle but as a background to perform in, are the close relatives of character dancers and monologists. They are not so fashionable as they were during the last century, and up to fifteen or twenty years ago. There are no contemporary Bernhardts or Duses. We still have Mrs. Fiske; but her Shakespeare is old-fashioned. When we see a classic revived nowadays we expect an original production as well as a star in the leading rôle. Ibsen, who served so many intellectual actresses, has dated, and the misunderstood ladies, the Hedda Gablers, have grown old and resigned themselves to their fates. Their heirs have not appeared, though Miss Katharine Cornell, whom the critics picked for that kind of stardom, has been looking for them for years. The critics object to the plays she does find, and no wonder. Even the dramatized *The Age of Innocence*, an improvement on her usual line, was as feeble as dramatizations are likely to be. Having a taste for trailing skirts, for sofas and sufferings and problems of stuffy Victorian interiors—problems of sensibility and scrupulousness, or of self-expression versus the convention that stifles, what is Miss Cornell to do in an age of freedom achieved? Heddas that manage chain stores and take up tap, are, for Miss Cornell's purposes, Heddas no more.

The Barretts of Wimpole Street

Her new play miraculously is made to satisfy most of her requirements. We are shown Elizabeth Barrett (Katharine Cornell) with her two sisters and, I believe, six brothers, dying off under the puritanical despotism of their father. Elizabeth, the eldest, was her father's favorite. She was the only love child, the rest, as we are made to understand, having come unbidden but unprevented. She has almost succumbed under the weight of Mr. Barrett's maleficent love, and we see her first as a chronic invalid whose whole life has taken refuge in the reading and writing of poetry. Through her poetry she meets Robert Browning (Brian Aherne), who is the afterglow of that Victorian crisp sensible courageousness which Meredith and the real Browning perfected between them. In this country we associate optimism that is so relentlessly therapeutic with deans of men in good football colleges. But, in the play, it works with the languid Elizabeth: Mr. Browning saves her from herself and from her father. His smile, the smile of the handsomest poet in England, will not be denied: under its reassuring beam she gets to her feet and—delight ineffable!—she walks;

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walking at last right out of the house to marry him and live in Italy.

Miss Cornell chose this play and presents it as her first venture in independent management. She is said to have recognized it on first reading as an ideal "vehicle". A vehicle for what? A vehicle for Miss Cornell's famous glamour, a machine for mounting her Mona Lisa of the upholstery. She has a taste for martyrdom: one of her best scenes is drinking down a pint of hated porter to avoid a quarrel with her father. She likes a sedentary and domestic sensibility: we see her smiling in a different way at each of her brothers, all of whom she understands, but none of whom really understands her. When her father breaks down and tells her he cannot bear to live without her, she has an opportunity to suffer exquisitely in silence. All of this is very good of its kind, very good Cornell, belated brainchild of Hedda. But is it Elizabeth Barrett? No; but the question hardly occurs to us. Is it right for the play? Hardly; but that matters even less.

It is the destiny of plays used by stars to be eclipsed, and this play is good for nothing else. It is an informal chronicle with elements of comedy and drama, fast-moving enough to hold the interest. For its brightness it has that British briskness I alluded to above, for its gloomy modernism and its villain all in one it has the discreetly Freudian character of Mr. Barrett, the father. A harmless enough confection, easily marketable among Miss Cornell's own public.

Mr. Aherne's Browning does not remind me of that poet as he emerges on a slight acquaintance with his work, but it appears to be what the author, Mr. Rudolf Besier, meant to make him. Mr. Aherne, Miss Joyce Carey, as the downtrodden sister, and Miss Margaret Barker, as the fighting sister, are all good actors. Mr. Charles Waldron, who played Mr. Barrett, was rather flat and stagy, but he held up his part of the story, and it is probable that this character was never imagined by the author as anything more interesting than a consistent and incredible villain. Altogether, a warmed-over evening. Miss Cornell should have been born forty years earlier. She might still have been a faint provincial echo, but an echo of something that was still alive enough to make a noise.

Madame Cotopouli's "Electra".

Miss Cornell draws her spiritual being from the comfortable suburbs of vast English-speaking cities, where the survivors of the Browning circles still live toward a sound old age, behind their lawns and rhododendron bushes, with the latest magazines and fiction from England. But Madame Cotopouli, a Greek, loses her dignity and shows Electra pulling her mother by the hair, or clawing out a hole to bury the old lady in, like a terrior absorbed in scratching for a rat. This is not necessarily right for Sophocles. Madame Cotopouli uses a version by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and the Electra we are interested in here is definitely by Madame Cotopouli herself.

Von Hofmannsthal changed the Sophocles play radically, and for the worse. He removed the chorus as such, and left a relaxed bevy of women-servants to talk things over in the pauses and be a mob at the climax. He cut it into three scenes, and so lost the express-train drive of the original. Worst of all, he entirely removed the scene at the beginning in which Orestes and his companion plan to murder Clytemnestra. This makes Orestes's arrival at the end a surprise, and puts the emphasis on Electra's triumph instead of on the fatal murder decreed by the gods. The suspense, which comes from expecting certain vengeance, is gone, and so is the sense of fatality, of unavertible tragedy. But this fatality, sung by Sophocles's choruses, is the core of his vision—without it there is no more sense of the supernatural, and the significance of the play is diminished to that of a family feud.

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It is too bad that Madame Cotopouli should have taken her modern Greek version from von Hofmannsthal's German, since she has the stuff of which Electras are made. She knows how to focus her whole being on one consuming point. She understands purposes too strong for words, that mould and possess the body as well as the soul. She has the kind of intense vision that utilizes physical things to body itself forth: when she digs the hole, the earth and stones she throws up become burningly alive in the light of her obsession; when she waits and listens her hopes and fears shape every line of her body. That is what acting should be. It is very rare for us to see anything so good.

Madame Cotopouli needs a director, to bring her company and *mise-en-scène* a little nearer the level she establishes. While she uses her whole body, the floor, and a flight of steps, most of her company stand and spout with little regard to what their bodies are expressing. She speaks in a swift, intense monotone, and her hottest speeches are more like chants than rhetorical flights. But her company is inclined to rant in a somewhat French style. Madame Cotopouli wears a tarnished black rag for a dress, and her hair tangling and bristling over her bright eyes. Against the stately cheesecloth and formal coiffeurs of the other actors, the figure of Madame Cotopouli is like a single vivid nightmare among baroque dummies. Compared with the expensive set and accurate 1840 costumes of Miss Cornell's play, *Electra* looks amateurish, arty and down-at-heels. *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* is carefully directed and built into its smug professional little climaxes, but *Electra,* standing around Madame Cotopouli, is full of long, dead stretches. The company reminds me a little of the one that the great Sicilian, Grasso, brought to a musty little theatre in the Bowery a few years ago. Though the Italians knew how to play together the staging of both companies was rather sloppy. Perhaps both Grasso and Cotopouli would have had the success they so richly deserve if they could have afforded to deal with the set-building and designing rackets.

Of course Madame Cotopouli's work, under the best of conditions, would probably seem eccentric to us. Her performance is more like gymnastics than opera singing; her Electra, violently alive and grovelling in her shame, is more of a fishwife than a disinherited princess. But how she understands murder! What an exact painting she gives us of fanaticism! Not the cranky, romantic kind, based on muddle-headedness, but the clear-sighted selfless kind, like that of a great nun. Her purpose, indeed, is so large that it nearly becomes religious, but religious in a cold black pagan way, hoping not for a future beatitude but for the removal of a present evil. Of a piece with her pessimistic aspiration is her dance of triumph at the end: a dance of sober and grotesque satisfaction, a dance of victory over an enemy physically dead at her feet.

City Lights

I have mentioned Madame Cotopouli's use of physical objects and of her own expressive body to stand for something ineffable she had to convey. Weak plays, like the *Barretts*—acting, staging, poetry that fails to move us—fail because they present us with nothing concrete that can mean the artist's emotion to us; they are mental and abstract. Sometimes the artist, like Mr. Besier, has no emotion; sometimes he fails to find what Mr. Eliot calls an "objective equivalent" for it. The Barretts may make it as clear as they like, by what they *say*, that Elizabeth is martyrized by her father, but no emotion comes to us until we see Miss Cornell slowly and silently drinking down her dose of porter. By showing us that episode, Miss Cornell transmits to us the emotion she intends, though the drinking of the porter is of course, not the emotion itself, but its objective equivalent. A good image, in poetry, does the same thing:

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Like as the waves make toward the pebbled
shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end. . . .

Waves and minutes, in their hastening, are different; but there is a quality in one affectively analogous to a quality in the other. When Electra tries to persuade Chrysothemis to help her murder their mother, Madame Cotopouli shows her wooing Chrysothemis like a lover. Poor Chrysothemis is dismayed and bewildered by such unseeing fervor. But Electra was not in love with her, she was in love with the end she sought through her; and the audience is shown, in Madame Cotopouli's passionate movements of seduction, a brilliant image of Electra's infatuation with the projected murder of her mother.

This strict reliance on the concrete is one of Charlie Chaplin's secrets. If any excuse is needed for discussing his latest film in notes supposedly devoted to the stage, it is that his method provides a model many stage artists would do well to study. It is lucky for us all that he developed as a speechless clown, and that he was wise enough not to make his new film "talkie". He never tells us about anything, he shows us something, and we laugh or cry. Words are hard even for a poet to bring to life, and a writer of dialogue can hardly hope to attain anything like the immediacy of a good image, much less of an authentic moment of acting. All he can hope to do, scratching his head in his large Hollywood suite, is figure out how to make the story clear, and Chaplin, the pantomimist, needs no help with that.

He took into his own hands both the directing and scenario-writing and made one of the better Charlie Chaplin legends. His girl, a blind flower-seller, loves him as long as she can't see him. His rich friend embraces him when drunk and kicks him downstairs when sober. In the midst of one of his few beatific moments, while he contemplates his lady love, a cat in an upper window knocks down a flower-pot that cracks him rudely on the head. This gives him a chance to make the best of things until the last close-up of Charlie watching the girl (whose sight is restored) realize what a hobo she has loved. Then he shows us an ironic gleam in the eye, like Chaplin stepping from behind the tramp make-up and confessing that he knew from the first what a sinister business life was. Notice—for I suppose that by the time this is published everyone will have seen *City Lights*—notice how well he understands how often to repeat his absurd misfortunes. Twice, while he is trying to rescue his drunken friend, they both fall into the harbor. When he is contemplating a picture in a store window, and stepping back, like a connoisseur, to get the proper light, a trap door opens behind him. He plays with this for a long time—sometimes the trap closes in time to receive him; sometimes he stops right on the brink. At last he falls in. The dénouement is as clear and well developed as the end of a theorem of geometry; but the repetitions serve not only for clarity, but to emphasize that cruel, laughable absurdity which is integral with the story and the character.

Of course Chaplin uses some of the dead trappings of the movies—he has not completely vitalized his medium. His music, though extraordinarily well related to the changing moods and rhythms of the pantomime, is trite movie music; his blind girl, though very good of her kind, is a film ingénue, and his interiors are overstuffed screen luxury or papier-maché screen picturesqueness. And then, Chaplin's poetry is confined to the character of Charlie Chaplin the hobo and his adventures. This figure moves, like Don Quixote in Kansas City, against an accurately photographed background of prize-fighters, rich men, and snappy street crowds such as we see daily. Mr. Chaplin does not depend, like Miss Cornell, on the moribund drawing-room tradition with its old-fashioned *décor*. He is not a star with a perfunctory vehicle, but he is an artist who has managed to set a comic legend in streets and among characters that we all know.

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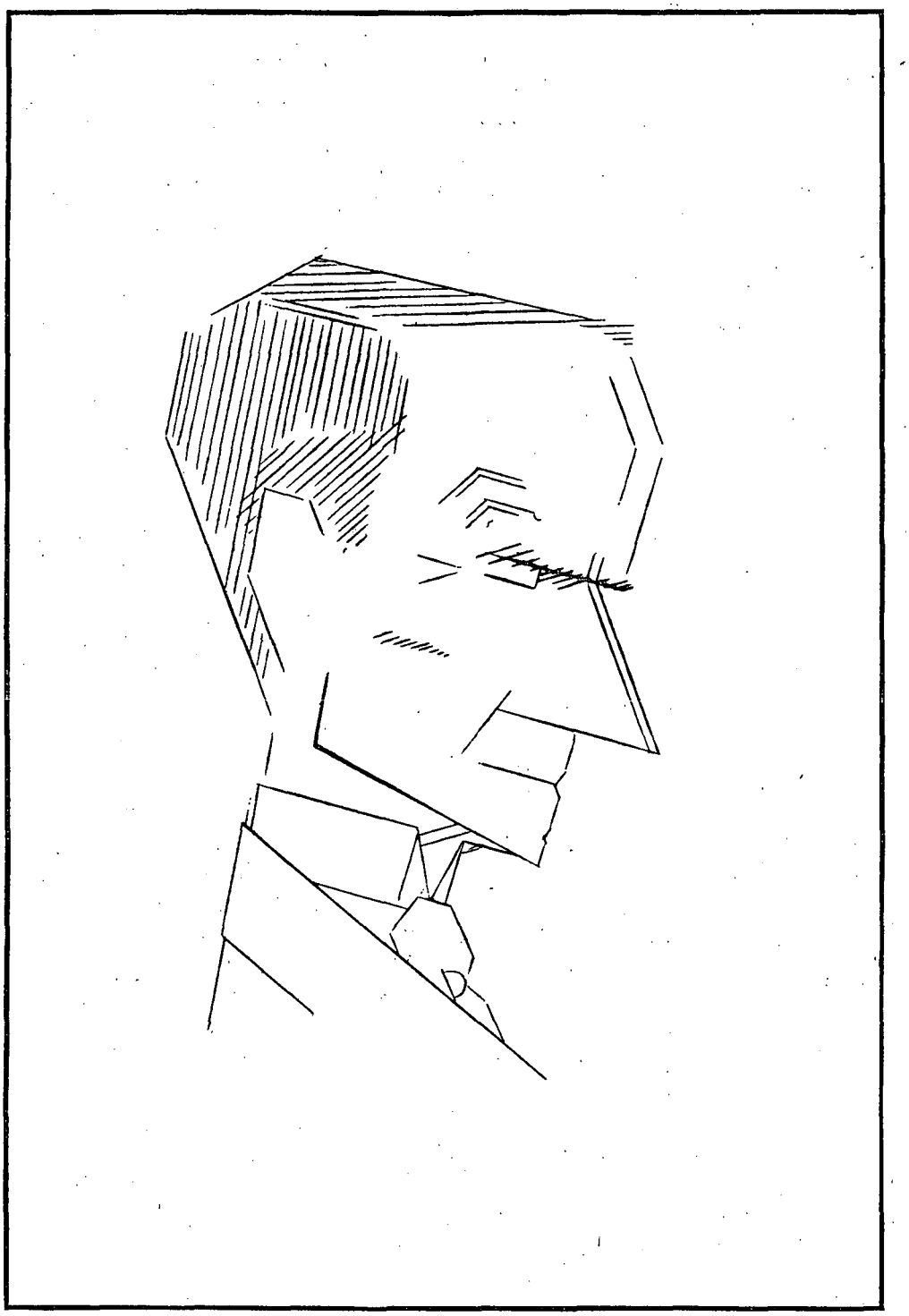

JOHN BUCHAN

Caricature by Eva Herrmann

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FICTION

WHEN THE WICKED MAN *by Ford Madox Ford* (LIVERIGHT. $2.50)

By turning to a well-worn American theme, the soul of a successful business man, Mr. Ford shows his versatility. Notterdam, though born in England, is presumably in Mr. Ford's opinion a typical American. He was a wild youth in the wild West (made a bit wilder, for Mr. Ford's convenience, than seems plausible for the period), and now in middle age is only a little less lawless, though outwardly respectable, in New York. The metropolis of Mr. Ford's novel is a romantically wicked city in which continual drinking, promiscuity, bootlegging, and gun-play are a chain linking the rich with the underworld; in which the honors, as in the old West, go still to the unscrupulous man—who succeeds.

With such Frank Norris-like materials we might reasonably fear conventional satire or melodrama. But Mr. Ford too obviously delights in his romantically wicked city, and utilizes too subtle, too amiable, and too quiet a method, for conventional satire. And though some of his material is certainly melodramatic, such is his emphasis that our interest is primarily psychological, and often for pages outer action is almost non-existent.

In this connection Mr. Ford's method is curious. He presumably knows as much about the technique of novel writing as any man living, and after all his years of training must have a reason for his method; but at first glance almost any other method would seem preferable. What he does is this. He starts the reader off with a brief scrap of direct narrative—too brief to be at all clear. Then by pages and pages of retrospect, ostensibly the inner soliloquy of Notterdam, the events preceding and explaining that brief scrap are elucidated. This does for a chapter. By jumping ahead several hours, days, or weeks, we get a fresh start for chapter two: another scrap of narrative, another score of reminiscent pages. In retrospect the first book of the novel gives us the whole of Notterdam's preceding life, and consists probably of one page of direct discourse to forty of *oratio obliqua*. The hero, for so hard-boiled an individual, is surprisingly—though conveniently—ready to recall in detail whatever part of his past the reader is at the moment in need of. Mr. Ford has used this sort of technique before, but it seems to have grown on him. If to be dramatic is to present events as though happening before one's eyes, Mr. Ford is the opposite of dramatic.

One enjoys the book nevertheless. One reason is the easy colloquial style which is always threatening to coil itself into a knot but always uncoils gently at the end of a sentence. Another is the selection of an American theme. As a result the native reader has the pleasurable opportunity of looking for slips in idiom and detail. Mr. Ford, for an Englishman, makes them seldom. More important is the opportunity to see ourselves through the eyes of a friendly and seasoned cosmopolitan. The sight might be a bit alarming did we not remember that Mr. Ford himself originated the aphorism, "New York is not America".

The chief pleasure in this novel, however, is the humor. Notterdam may be wicked, as the title would imply, in a sort of heroic style; but he is also, incongruously, a man of conscience. In his youth he lived a pretty

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rough life, and prospered by it, but never felt easy in his mind. Now, as a successful publisher, by repudiating a contract he makes a famous author commit suicide; he seduces his stenographer, and though madly in love with her he becomes involved with the widow of the suicide, a woman well described as "wild" (and a racy characterization, too); drunk, and lusting after this lady, he shoots and kills one of her paramours, a notorious gangster. As a result of this last exploit he wins the plaudits of his countrymen and returns to the arms of his adoring stenographer. There is humor in the oblique light which this ironic finale casts on American manners; but the chief comedy lies in the contrast between Notterdam's conduct and his feelings.

So far from being exalted in his own eyes, Notterdam sees himself without illusions, and is indeed, continually being reproached by a melancholy *doppelgänger* which his tired nerves, assisted by alcohol, materialize to remind him of his lost ideals. Everything that he does—such being the way of America—turns to financial profit and social glory; but a sort of vestigial idealism keeps him from simply enjoying them. We have the theme, the urbanity, the subtlety for high comedy; but Mr. Ford's indirection muffles the effect. We smile, but less than we might.

Mr. Ford's personality, as revealed in his books, is engagingly humorous and humane. By nature, it would seem, he belongs in the amiable tradition of Dickens and Thackeray rather than among the cerebral theorizers of Montmartre whom he knows so well.

SANCTUARY *by William Faulkner* (CAPE & SMITH. $2.50)

THOSE who relish the raw meat of fiction will find a whole butcher shop in this ostensibly realistic picture of Tennessee folkways. A considerable acquaintance with the ghastly details of human depravity and misery as painstakingly accumulated by modern naturalists may harden one against ordinary shocks; but Mr. Faulkner may well be granted the dubious honor of being extraordinarily shocking. Mere horror for its own sake usually misses its effect upon a sophisticated reader by reason of the obviousness of the attempt; and a more skilful treatment—even one as imaginatively powerful as that of Robinson Jeffers—may by its very extravagance provoke some to incredulous laughter. One would be happy to dismiss this book in some such fashion. But aside from an occasional obvious straining for the vivid epithet the author is at all times master of his medium; and his characterization and plotting compel our reluctant belief. Such things, we know, do happen; and they probably happen in just such ways.

The old argument about the themes of naturalistic horror need not be repeated. Most readers prefer not to mole through the sewers of life; and some who do are undoubtedly moved by abnormal tastes. An author is free to choose his subject; but readers are free not to read him if he chooses the depths of degeneracy and evil, and presents them not only without the softening effect of idealization but with an obvious desire to exploit the last nervous thrill to be got from a complete concrete visualization of every detail. Among other similar things, for example, the exact mechanical method and physical as well as emotional effects of a rape upon a young girl by an impotent degenerate are gradually but relentlessly exposed in this novel, skilfully held back to be revealed at the moment when they will shock the most. Those who play the game of exploiting the *frisson nouveau* find that its stakes are continually rising; each must raise his predecessor's ante. Mr. Faulkner has evidently determined not to be a piker. But unless a reader has a relish for sadistic cruelty, or a sort of medical interest in it, he will prefer milder pursuits.

A fair reader will none the less admit Mr. Faulkner's ability. The technique of *Sanc-*

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tuary is an example of the very promising method, gradually being perfected through many experiments, which fuses the cinematic scene-shifting of expressionism, the almost obscure brevity and vivid sensationalism of the imagists, and the intense exploration of momentary experience characteristic of writers like Conrad, with the classic formal beauty of an intricate plot skilfully implicated, rigorously unified, and implacable in its advance to a fore-designed end. The blurb on the jacket says that *Sanctuary* is "hideously and terrifically—and therefore beautifully—great". It would take a blurbist to identify the hideous with beauty; but we may assume that what he would say if he stopped for distinctions is that in spite of material ugliness the novel has the formal beauty of a complicated puzzle masterfully solved.

There are esthetes who are so fascinated by such virtuosity that they can ignore ordinary prejudices; some even take pride in doing so. But the normal reader, unskilled in suppressing his impulses toward kindliness and sympathy merely to appreciate the skill with which those feelings are outraged, is likely to judge otherwise. If any theory of esthetics leads to justification of such a book as this, he is tempted to say, better send theory to the devil and join the naïve majority who feel that the novelist should practise somewhat the same restraint in his imagination as is expected of him in his conduct. If modern naturalism provokes such immoderate reactions it has only its own immoderateness to blame.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

FESTIVAL *by Struthers Burt* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.50)

AGAIN Mr. Burt has written the story of a man trying to "find himself" in relation to life and love. Again the major characters are intelligent sophisticates, whose trials are not trivial and whose observations have a welcome sparkle. And again the style is that of an artist. *Festival* on all counts is equal to *The Delectable Mountains* and therefore superior to *The Interpreter's House.*

Dorn Griffiths is a more than successful banker who bravely decides that art and thinking and living have been overpowered by Philadelphia and the counting house. He retires and then faces the everlasting question of "What next?" Délice is his daughter, and not merely of the flesh; her nature and accordingly her problems parallel his. It is this double portrait, this father-and-daughter symmetry, that makes the novel. The danger of losing an essential unity by going from one of these two characters to the other is averted by the remarkable kinship of their personalities and by placing them frequently in the same scene. Other characters, such as Dorn's wife and his near-wife, Délice's husband and her lover, and that dear friend and physician to the mind, Craigie Leedom, though considerably more static, are carefully executed. All the people are worth knowing; they were not selected, according to the naturalistic pattern, because they were ordinary or vulgar or "real". They are true, despite our inability to meet them in any smoking car or seaside hotel.

Business, man *versus* woman, America *versus* Europe, the art of life, are some of the topics that concern these creations and that are handled with commendable wisdom and urbanity. It is hard to dissociate Mr. Burt's philosophic cloth from the fine and brilliant stylistic thread he uses. To be sure, he has an ability beyond that of the average novelist, for he has seen and has thought; but that does not explain the delightful terseness, the epigrammatic sentence, the phrasal power, without which all eager eyes and brains might remain eyes and brains and nothing more. Just how may one explain why one novelist can arrange words in a distinctive manner and another cannot? Mr. Burt's prose is smart and not precious, biting and not bitter, polished and not glossy.

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The flaw in the structure lies in the last fifty pages, where a let-down is indeed perceptible. Perhaps another fifty would have helped, but as it is the book seems to lose its integrity towards the end. The disposition of Dorn's fate is justly ironical, though this stroke hardly redeems the looseness and softness of the final chapters. The charge may be brought that the novel is deficient in action; certainly most of the story is taken up with the mental and spiritual progress of a man and a woman. But should "action" be construed to mean merely action of the arms and legs, or even jaws?

RICHMOND P. BOND

THE LION TOOK FRIGHT *by Louis Marlow* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

THERE are strange things in this book and those who would not be drawn too deeply into life will do well to pass it by. The pattern of the story is not unfamiliar; there is the seashore and there are a few people who are isolated against a wide horizon and each other. They are enclosed in the confines of their separate desires, and they are driven by the need for satisfaction. Sometimes their yearning is sad, again it is comic, and often it is contemptible; for Louis Marlow is honest with his vision of people spending their days in futile juxtaposition, and he occasionally creates a terrifying reality.

Mrs. Derrick is afraid to be unoccupied and, at the moment, she is a voracious collector of celebrities. Mr. Derrick has ceased trying, and he is a shadowy figure that catches the train for London. Lois, quite a young lady, demands very little more than masculine attention. She has no understanding of her morose, troubled sister Julia whose "mouth is too near her nose". Mr. Brangdon, the nicely bearded stranger, is more a devil than a lion with Julia; and he almost escapes when he becomes afraid of her youthful passion. Mr. Brangdon admires Mr. Brangdon with all the concentration of which his little mind is capable, and he is the more annoying for being the embodiment of a complacency only too universally distributed. The Stalhams are the neighbors, and they increase Julia's uncertainty by their strange, grotesque life.

Actually, Julia is the book; for *The Lion Took Fright* tells the story of her swift change from a childish adolescent to a disillusioned woman. The others are unimportant and only significant in their relation to her; she lives and suffers and changes while they remain the same. At first she escapes from the disappointment of being unloved by the girl Paula, and of being herself ugly and separate, by retreating into a dream-world where she is regal. Then she breaks under her defences and the unbearable beauty of sky and sea and land and she goes, hysterical and rouged, in defiance from her room. There is accidentally a hideous encounter with Dr. Stalham, and Julia hates all men until the superior attentions of Mr. Brangdon release her mind and body and soul. When she discovers his triviality and deception she comes of age; in a little while she looks upon the loss of her love and smiles faintly as she admits that in the morning it will matter less. Julia is fine and sensitive and doomed to pain; one feels that through her Louis Marlow is expressing his belief that the spiritual grace of life is choked out by the rank weeds that flourish.

NANCY EVANS

THE LITTLE TOWN *by Heinrich Mann* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

PARTLY Italian in origin himself, Heinrich Mann has laid the scene of his little *comédie humaine* in a town in Italy so small that no opera company has visited it for more than forty-eight years. Given this circumstance, Herr Mann undertakes to show the manifold consequences on a representative number of its inhabitants of a troupe of wandering artists from the great world. The charac-

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ters are therefore so numerous that it requires all of three pages merely to list them; of plot in the usual sense there is none—only an endless number of sub-plots so closely interwoven as to resemble the imponderable complexity of human society itself. Lawyers, inn-keepers, sopranos, priests, beggars and honest bourgeois are all at once bound together by the abrupt challenge to their lives thrust at them by the mysterious, glamorous, and above all voluptuous world of Art represented by the nondescript operatic troupe. Dreams of lust and ambition are awakened; philosophies are reborn over the café tables and along the alleys; intrigues bristle around every corner of the little town. The chapter in which Herr Mann projects for us the much-awaited performance at the Opera House is a considerable *tour de force*, for here he re-creates, by means of rapidly contrasted segments of dialogue and unuttered revery, the response of an entire audience to a work of art. Not always is Herr Mann's free dependence on dialogue so effective; sometimes the result is characterization of a dramatic brilliancy, but sometimes also it is monotony and confusion. Perhaps it is this excessive strain on the attention of the reader by every speech in the book that will keep it from being as much admired as its many separate qualities of wit, charm and ingenuity deserve.

WILLIAM TROY

GARDENER OF EVIL *by Pierre Loving* (BREWER & WARREN. $2.50)

CERTAINLY we have reached the high watermark in the Baudelaire cult when the life of that prince of bourgeois-baiters is served up in novelized form as between-meals fodder for that same bourgeoisie. A few months ago Lewis Piaget Shanks's *Baudelaire* made further biographical research on the great poet unnecessary; for the complete consecration of his glory we lacked only a psychoanalytical dissection of his "neuroses" and a novel built about his life. These two conditions, which Baudelaire, if he had foreseen the trend of the times, would not have omitted from his last will, have now been fulfilled, the one by Dr. Laforgue and the other by Pierre Loving. The one fact which a comparison of these three books reveals is that the tendency in recent Baudelairiana leans towards emphasizing the tragic aspect of his life.

The faults in Pierre Loving's *Gardener of Evil* are inherent in the hybrid form he has adopted, which approaches closer to the historical novel than to the novelized biography; the accent at any rate is on the word "novel". By drawing upon all the available letters and memoirs of Baudelaire's friends, he has given more life to the epoch than to the personality of Baudelaire; this may be the result of the fact that in his picture of the poet he has overlooked the poetry. At times this account strives so hard to become "good reading" that it makes painful reading. Throughout the novel, the subjective method goes too far, for it would take a spiritual brother like Poe to put thoughts into Baudelaire's mind which would be at home there. When "Charles" speaks or thinks with an authentic accent, we have only to turn the pages of the *Journaux Intimes* to find that Mr. Loving is quoting verbatim—a quite legitimate device if only it did not produce such an unequal effect. Again Mr. Loving seems, for all his exactitude, to have taken slight liberties: for instance, did Baudelaire stand in admiration before the El Grecos in the Louvre? If Baudelaire had made such a discovery long before the rest of the world, you may be sure he would have written of it as he did of Daumier and Poe. El Greco in 1840 looks very much like an anachronism.

But, after all, Charles Baudelaire is here with his dandyism and tortured idealism, his disease and his drugs, his thwarted devotion to his mother and pitiful love affairs with Sarah, Jeanne, and Mme Sabatier, his intense hatred for General Aupick and respectability

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in general, and his constant self-pitying frustration. In comparison, however, with the image we get from every line of *Les Fleurs du mal* and every scribbled page of *Mon Coeur mis à nu*, the portrait appears lacking in life and only half-finished. The greatest service that Pierre Loving performs is to send us back to our editions of the poems for another reading to re-create our own image of the great master of modern poetry.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

OUR GODS ARE NOT BORN *by Charles R. Walker* (CAPE & SMITH. $2.00)

WITH regard to substance, there is not much in these stories that is new. The moods and sentiments, though various, all have models in the writing of the last decade. One finds here the common salesman baffled by the sudden touch of beauty and mystery, the young business man in revolt against business, the young artist in revolt against everyone. The only feature of Mr. Walker's stories which might be called original is the injection into his characters of a demonic virulence. Whereas Anderson's people used to brood mildly on revolt, these people have fiend-like hallucinations of power, or else they signify their dissent in some perverse and violent deed—such, for instance, as tripping a waiter, or crushing a glass in the mouth of a friend. But they awaken from both visionary and actual encounters disillusioned. And the tone of disillusion, which colors the writing, is old-fashioned, literary. To read these stories, in many ways so fresh and lively, is to realize that the tone of futility and the indefinite conclusion have become conventions, as tyrannical as, a few years back, were the humorous tone and the surprise ending.

But to call this volume old-fashioned is to suggest that there is a new fashion in short stories to which it does not conform. There is, unfortunately, no new fashion in short stories. Mr. Walker adheres, like everyone else, to the old formulas. But these he handles well. And when he is not sentimental, when he is not engaged in setting off verbal firecrackers, he also writes well.

FREDERICK DUPEE

THE WHITE PATERNOSTER AND OTHER STORIES *by T. F. Powys* (VIKING. $2.50)

SINCE the inception of the era of Interior Decoration we have been hanging our walls with those neat little prints which, though executed by a modern hand, hark back to a manner of the past. The same thing is represented in book form by these twenty-six neat little stories by Mr. Powys. Uniform in locale, perspective and framing, they unmistakably form a "series", and are inspired likewise by the same kind of fanciful antiquarianism. The Dorsetshire village serves Mr. Powys excellently as a timeless background for vignettes of this nature, for little happens there, at least in his recording, that might not have happened one, two, or even three centuries ago. He views this world of his with the eyes of a benevolent miniaturist, and disposes of each character, scene, or plot with a single smiling stroke—in somewhat the same manner as the pseudo-antique etcher who, since naïveté is the desirable thing, etches not only the sun but the sun's rays, like so many spokes of a wheel.

The physical center of Mr. Powys's little world is its church. Very few of his stories are not invaded by the rector, the sexton, the Scripture, or the sound of church bells. The rector pays the sexton to keep him informed of what is going on in the village. And a great deal, of course, is always going on, which Mr. Powys considers as important and innocent as what goes on in church. (He makes no bones about the glee he takes in carnal matters. In his way he is as staunch a defender of sensuality as his brother John Cowper Powys.)

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The spiritual center of Mr. Powys's world is literature itself. This subject, which a story writer is supposed to forget while he is writing, plays an important part in these stories—shapes the course of the action of most of them; in fact, Mr. Powys frankly addresses himself to a decadent audience, to those who would be most disagreeably nettled if a book were to intensify their personal experience of life, who like to run across an amusing reference to the snow-stuffed chicken of Francis Bacon, and who receive their principal esthetic pleasure when they chance upon an artful copy of something they have already read before. The aim of these stories is to provide the fairly-well-read reader with an escape from reality. Mr. Powys has succeeded charmingly in demonstrating that the principles of Interior Decoration can be applied to the bookcase as well as to the walls.

ACCORDING TO THOMAS *by Ivan Nazhivin* (HARPERS. $3.00)

In 1878 Tolstoy made a criticism of Renan's *Life of Jesus* which might well be applied to all literature of this kind. "For us, all human, demeaning, realistic details have vanished from the life of Jesus, for the same reason that all details about all Jews and others who ever lived have vanished, as all vanishes that is not eternal. In other words, the sand that was not wanted has been washed away by an unalterable law, and the gold has remained. One would think the only thing, therefore, was to accept the gold. But no! Renan says. If there is gold, there must have been sand; and he tries to rediscover the sand; and does it all with an air of profundity!"

In 1903 Tolstoy advised Mr. Nazhivin against the life of Jesus that he then intended to write. But the effect of his advice was merely to delay the execution of Mr. Nazhivin's plan for twenty-five years. Therefore today we have his book, *According to Thomas*, as translated from the Russian by Mr. Emile Burns. It is in the form of a novel, relating the history of the Galilean rabbi "Jeshua" in the spirit of a doubting Thomas.

Let it be said at once that it is in no way comparable to Renan's book. That, despite the fundamental truth of Tolstoy's criticism, had many excellences. Mr. Nazhivin's book, in the first place, is not original. The idea expressed in its title will seem clever enough: he assumes that Thomas was outraged by the misrepresentations of Matthew and wrote a Gospel of his own, only to be persuaded to destroy it later on because it was too matter-of-fact. But it is evident that the irony of this, like the irony of so many other passages, is not Mr. Nazhivin's own. It comes from Anatole France—as so much of the rest of his book from other writers. In fact, in a scene with Pontius Pilate, Mr. Nazhivin has almost literally repeated the effect of the famous last line of France's *Procurator of Judea*. And the result of his borrowed "scepticism" and "realism" is to present us with a hero who is so "gentle" that he is continually bursting into tears, who is such a sentimental cry-baby, in fact, that if he had ever existed at all he would not have kept any disciple for more than a week. Mr. Nazhivin has not only passed up the gold in the New Testament; even his sand is no good.

GERALD SYKES

THE GOOD HOPE *by Henry Sydnor Harrison* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.00)

This last story by the author of *Queed* and *V.V.'s Eyes* is strange and anachronistic nowadays. People who are fundamentally simple and good do not often pass before us in the current novels. No one seems to think them worth writing about. Mr. Harrison was one of the school which did, and he wrote about them with sympathy and skill. These two qualities are evident in the present posthumous work, a short novel with

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a supernatural twist at the end. It is interesting to note the swiftness with which this story is told. In the first forty pages, the material of the narrative would make any average novel of the padded variety; but here it moves rapidly, clearly, and with a certain charm in the space of two ordinary opening chapters. Lawrence Renney makes his fortune, loses his friends, makes new ones, loses the fortune and contemplates suicide, all in this limited space, and no amount of verbosity could have given more suspense to the events. But this is the best of the novel; and toward the end, an unfortunately mawkish scene upsets things rather badly, so that the reader, in getting over the shock, becomes too unsettled to derive the full benefit of a fairly interesting climax.

MORNING TIDE *by Neil M. Gunn* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.50)

FROM front to back of the cover jacket, *Morning Tide* is a distinct pleasure, the more so because, contrary to the usual experience, its excellences of design and illustration enclose a novel of interest and power.

It is a story of Scotch fisher-people, and is told from the viewpoint of Hugh MacBeth, twelve-year-old son of Captain MacBeth, skipper of a fishing smack. Mr. Gunn is original. Courageously omitting birth, death, crime (if we except a little poaching) and perversion, he proceeds, without any of these primary requisites, to write excitingly, poetically and humorously about the villagers. There is no plot, in the ordinary sense of the word. The order of events is purely casual. One thing follows another, and leads on. It doesn't pour simply because it rains, and this very lack of the conventionally inevitable makes the book more real. Some of the scenes, such as the leave-taking of Alan, the older MacBeth son, or the storm, or Hugh's single-handed poaching expedition, are vivid art. All are good scenes; and with the single exception of Kirsty, the eldest sister, the characters are splendid creations. As for the point-of-view character, Hugh, he is a human creature, which can't be said for the average boy in books. He is shy, awkward, eager, self-reliant, and entirely free from philosophical speculation. Hugh lives in the present, save for a random memory, or a furtive apprehension concerning such an immediate future as the day in school. He sees the life around him as experience. His sisters' love-making with the same man, the storm, the rescue, his brother's departure, his mother's illness—these affect him emotionally, but they are not problems to him. He assimilates them without struggle. He does not ponder, and his thoughts disclose no epigrams. A fine young animal with a growing sensitiveness, he hardly knows that he possesses such a quality.

Mr. Gunn's style is distinguished by brilliance and color. He creates images. His words roll and crash like the heavy seas he describes, or, on the other hand, they move with the softness of the breeze. There are minor flaws, such as a disinclination to use "he said" or "she said" after a speech, and some straining at substitution of another verb. But the speeches themselves are excellent, alive, and subtly blended with the atmosphere of the narrative. One easily forgets infelicities in a book as good as this one.

ROBERT MOLLOY

OLD FIRST *by Lawrence Perry* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $2.50)

HERE is a novel thoroughly consistent from the first page to the last. Having called it *Old First* Mr. Perry writes a story centering in and dominated by the spirit of the First Presbyterian Church of Brookfield, back in the 1870's when the young people did not go buggy-riding for pleasure on the Sabbath and a railroad journey from Newark to Long Branch was an adventure to be undertaken with prayer. He has tried to re-create the atmosphere of a community and a state of

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mind which has quite completely disappeared. Brookfield is in New Jersey, but it might be any where in New England or New York State; a sleepy, sedate old town with a village green on which face the homes of the élite, dominated at one end by the Old First and at the other by the Library Hall, where the annual social event, the Maple Club Minstrel Show, is about to be held when the story opens.

Mary Blythe is completely fascinated by the finished effects of the worldly young Philip Woodbury (of Newark!) who has substituted at the eleventh hour for the local endman and who obviously directs his best efforts in her direction—only to be equally upset emotionally on the following Sunday by the public repentance of Calvin Barnes, ". . . so dark, so handsome, so dashing . . . and so wicked". Her love for these two men furnishes the romance of the book, all of which would be more convincing if, in writing of the seventies, Mr. Perry had adhered less rigidly to the style of those decorous years.

MILDRED SEITZ

WIDE OPEN TOWN *by Myron Brinig* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $2.50)

IN HIS new novel Mr. Brinig returns to Silver Bow, the crude Montana mining city which was the setting for his *Singermann*. The time is the first decade of this century when the saloons were wide open.

John Donnelly has recently arrived from the old country, a bit green, a good Catholic boy, an upstanding young bucko of twenty-nine. Roddy Cornett, in America forty years, John's uncle, with a powerful fine voice, Silver Bow's silver-tongued orator who introduces President Roosevelt to his fellow citizens; Old Weber, a drunken musician who had once talked with Wagner; Sammy Pickens, ex-big-league ball pitcher, and other lesser fry hang out a good deal in the Pacific Saloon. Occasionally one or several drift "down the line" where old-time Madames keep wide open houses and where a man has his fun with the girls. It was all very fine and pleasant in spite of occasional shootings and the infrequent appearances of human rats. John, who has become a miner, gets warmed up with a few whiskies one night and goes "down the line" much against his conscience. He is repelled and intends to back out until he meets Zola, Scandinavian beauty, product of a Nebraska farm. Zola is no sentimental figure. She is the born courtesan and betrayer of men. But she was not intended to be a common prostitute and she is sick of Galena Street. John takes Zola away from her sordid life, but Zola continues to think she is too good for a common miner.

Mr. Brinig, without being a sentimentalist, loves lingering over old times and old characters. His prose is distinctive, often powerful. He approaches his work with seriousness, which is not to say that it lacks humor or sentiment. Mr. Brinig is worth keeping in mind and talking about. He will go further, even though as yet he has not written an important novel.

FRED T. MARSH

THE NAME OF ACTION *by Graham Greene* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

WITH traditional modesty, the publishers of Graham Greene's second novel define it as a "brilliant psychological melodrama of the senses". For a story allied with the school and technique popularized by E. Phillips Oppenheim, this adjectival generosity seems unwarranted. Mr. Greene's first book evoked merited applause and keen curiosity as to the outcome of his manifest promise. *The Name of Action*, however, while a facile and competent piece of writing, does not justify any salvo of cheers. A guileless tale of international romance in a mythical Rhineland republic, it remains a colorful treatment of a cinema theme.

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The plot recounts the incredible adventures of Oliver Chant, a young English millionaire who is bored with the amenities of Mayfair. His decision to finance a revolution in Trier brings him into contact with the alluring wife of the state's puritanic dictator. The discriminating hero ignores the husband who "would bind men in clean chains" and concentrates his martial aid on assignations with the wife. The final success of the revolt turns on the veracious rumor, published in scurrilous broadsheets, that the iron dictator has been cuckolded by the English visitor. The Electoral Palace is surrounded by a mob of grinning peasants from whose midst come catcalls and jeers instead of bullets and stones. The dictator is laughed out of power and Trier is once more a free state.

Mr. Greene's fashionable melodrama is second-rate Graustark written in first-rate style. Despite a supple prose and an unconventional ending, the abuse of coincidence and theatrical props makes his narrative hollow and factitious. *The Name of Action* is another of those numerous publications "too bad for a blessing, too good for a curse".

APACHE *by Will Levington Comfort* (DUTTON. $2.50)

AMERICANA is still in vogue, and diligent writers continue their researches into the private lives of our red-skinned forbears. *Apache* is the current tribute to the first Americans, supplementing Thomas Le Forge's *Memoirs of a White Crow Indian*, Oliver La Farge's *Laughing Boy* and Frank Linderman's *American*. The work under review is the fictionized biography of an Indian chieftain of the eighteen-hundreds, a man whom a contemporary historian hailed as "the most famous Apache warrior and statesman of the century".

Don-Ha, who later bore the blood-won name of Red Sleeve, is reminiscent of the stern, stoical, unyielding Indian brave immortalized in the sensational novels of Cooper. His predestined march to supremacy and ultimate defeat are narrated in romantic detail. He learns how to hunt, how to herd horses, how to steal from the corrals of the Nakai-yes (Mexicans), and how to distrust the soft-tongued white men. The two chapters descriptive of a duel with knives symbolizing Don-Ha's unquestioned assumption of leadership are examples of finished melodrama, and the poetry inherent in tribal customs is rendered with unobtrusive skill.

The death of the hero at the hands of the treacherous invading whites brings the book to a dramatic finale. At his death-bed, a brother chieftain intones the liturgy of a vanishing race as he laments the coming of the white men. "Where we go only to the ends of our borders, they pass through all borders. Where we go forth in tens, they come in thousands. Where we would have an end of war, they have not begun. There is no end to the Meh-hi-kanos, they are never still. The days of our people are numbered."

This tale is not only the stranger-than-fiction story of the spectacular triumph and defeat of a single man; it is also a stirring account of the conquest of southwestern New Mexico by marauding Mexicans and gold-seeking Americans.

WILLIAM J. FADIMAN

YEHUDA *by Meyer Levin* (CAPE & SMITH. $2.50)

As the first American venture in fiction to present the farm-commune life under the new Zionist movement in Palestine, Meyer Levin's novel, *Yehuda*, is of particular contemporary interest. "In the farm commune called Carmel, in the land of Israel, there lives a comrade named Yehuda, who plays on a violin." And, in a simple, poetic narrative style that recalls the beauty of Old Testament phrasing, we are told a great deal about this young violinist, his dreams, and his three conflicting loves: the fiddle, pretty Yocheved, and the soil. Soon, too, we become acquainted

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with the German Herschl and his girl Masha; Daavid and his Sonya; the idealist Sholom; practical Feldman, the natural leader of "the Seven"; Podolsky the gardener; Mr. Paley, the American who comes to visit the settlement, and many others.

But the most interesting things in the story are the recording of those small, everyday problems, vexations, quarrels, sorrows and joys that are bound to arise in the life of any such newly-launched community venture. There is the constant menace of thieving Arabs; the machine that breaks down in the midst of harvest; the question of new sleeping quarters for the younger children; the water shortage; the agony of working in the fields when the burning *chamseen* blows; the building of the new cow-barn; and (so important to Yehuda) the visit of a world-famous violinist to the colony. The reader finds himself in turn amused, annoyed, sympathetic, indignant—but always interested; for this novel is more than a love story, more that a case-study of trial and error, more than a piece of good reporting: it is an absorbingly vivid and consistent human document.

RUTH LECHLITNER

STRANGE COMBAT *by Sarah Salt* (BREWER & WARREN. $2.50)

A CERTAIN type of novel exemplifying a tradition which the novel in general seems to be moving away from is bound to appear from time to time; if only to convince us that, when it is well done, such a novel can be exciting and even seem brave. *Strange Combat* moves directly in the line of novels concerning themselves with emotions in the hearts of mean people; of people who must live meanly and think in terms of pennies as well as love, often getting them mixed up together in their miserable unhappiness or their brief holidays of happiness. In England Frank Swinnerton has best devoted himself to the realism of meanness, and in this country Stephen Crane distinguished the attitude with the marks of a style.

The furious pace of *Strange Combat* is, hardly, the mark of a style; but how else the story could have been told, in novel form, of aging Jane's swift admiration for Andrew's broad shoulders, and his sponging and apologies to himself for living off Jane's admiration while belligerently keeping her out of his embrace, it is difficult to see. The natural dialogue and the various moods it reflects without further comment would be distinguished enough; for out of it, the author has built up characters whose very narrowness has a complexity and deviation of motive that would seem subtle in others of greater proportion. The account is not, finally, moving; but stray responses, as when Jane watches Andrew fight and lose badly in the ring, are obtained, without any other device than honest writing. The honesty of *Strange Combat* to its own intention is admirable; and if this seem grudging admiration, it is because of the strangeness of seeing what has been done before so well done again.

KENNETH WHITE

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BIOGRAPHY

LINCOLN, THE MAN *by Edgar Lee Masters* (DODD, MEAD. $5.00)

DEDICATING his volume to Thomas Jefferson as "the pre-eminent philosopher and statesman" of the United States, and as "their best president", Mr. Masters proceeds thereafter to fight with the fact that "Lincoln overtops" him, and constructs a character, which if correct, should surely have proven unfit for such a major accomplishment, reprehending "the anomaly" presented by "Lincoln standing by the side of Washington and Jefferson, with no other statesman to follow them in equality". For some curious reason this is a fault in Lincoln, upon whose shoulders is also laid the blame for the sins of the Republican party as they have flowered since 1865; he is even blamed for the "massacres" in the Philippines during McKinley's administration. To account for him his ancestry is rescrutinized disadvantageously. His grandfather, also an Abraham, "ran away" from the American Revolution. As for his father? "Thomas Lincoln had all the indicia of the Southern poor white", who "behaved as if he was sprung from the lowest stratum of American life in the early part of the nineteenth century", and was, moreover, "unmoral, shiftless, bound down in poverty, in spite of the fact that he had inherited enough from his father to have made him well circumstanced, if he had possessed ambition and prudence". His mother, Nancy Hanks, was the sister of one Lucy Hanks who was indicted in Mercer County, Kentucky, "for unbecoming conduct". He accepts Nancy as being an illegitimate child, and having a vagrant for a cousin. Truly life in the pioneer cabins was not as lofty as it was at Monticello! Thomas, her husband did not "join any church until 1819"!

"Much whisky was drunk", though no estimate is given of the contents of the Jeffersonian wine cellar. "The food was vile, consisting of pork or game, but much meat at any rate, and of corn bread and wheat bread which was made from meal ground in crude mortars", grease being the fundamental of all cooking. It may be surprising to know that Lincoln grew to six feet four upon this diet and was the strongest man in the region around Decatur, Illinois, where these hardships were endured.

Not admitting that he could rise in mental stature, which was rather in evidence through his progress in politics, "there is still something incongruous in the tall youth of Pigeon Creek taking up with Henry Clay and Whiggery, that deceiving appellation for the discredited Hamiltonians who were put down by Jefferson in 1800". The critic fails to mention that Jefferson owed his election to the presidency to Alexander Hamilton, but for whose support in the contest which landed him in Congress, Colonel Aaron Burr, of New York, would have been chosen. He tied with Jefferson on the electoral vote. Next, Lincoln's love affairs are overhauled with the idea of proving him a faithless lover, which he quite possibly was. Other men have been guilty of a like fault and the pioneers did a good deal of miscellaneous "sparking". In further discrediting, Lincoln is pictured as ashamed of his poverty—though not the first to feel this emotion.

It requires three hundred and seventy-seven pages to land Lincoln in Washington as president. He will have him cold-heartedly viewing the death of Stephen A. Douglas,

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who had gone home to Illinois in the interest of the Union. "Utterly unmourned", Mr. Masters puts it. After Bull Run "the Confederates could have gone on and taken Washington if they had tried to do so". They did not try, in spite of the many perfections the author finds in them. For example he has two soldiers dying on the field: "One was a soldier under Lincoln. He exclaimed, 'My God! What is all this for?' The other was a Confederate soldier, who said, 'Boys, they have killed me, but never give it up' ". When the prisons up North were filled with alleged Southern sympathizers, uncomfortably lodged: "Thus the republic of Washington and Jefferson vanished".

"The American spirit there had not been crushed", is the phrase used to describe the "Copperhead" activity of C. L. Vallandigham in Ohio. Just what the harassed Man in the White House ought to have done, Mr. Masters does not reveal. The earmarks indicate that he should have moved out.

For: "In the Southern army was Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve, perhaps the most learned and eloquent Hellenist that America has produced, who saw in the struggle between the North and South the disastrous contest of Sparta and Athens repeated. Indeed Virginia poured the flower of her youth from her colleges and academies into the cause of the Declaration of Independence; governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed". These valiant youngsters, it is gratifying to learn, "carried Thucydides and Homer with them as they marched, and pored over annals and poems when they camped". It is to be feared that the ignorant Northern troopers played poker instead of perusing the classics, of which the Man in the White House, of course, had no knowledge. Besides this, "While Butler was stealing spoons and heaping degradation upon the women of New Orleans; and while Sherman carried war with Hunnish frightfulness through Georgia to the sea, Lee fought with ever-decreasing force against the greatest armies that the North could send against him, and without a stain upon his honor as a gentleman and as a Captain of civilized soldiers".

Lincoln, to Masters's mind, established the national bank system, not to finance the war, but to provide "plundering monopolists" with "a bank which should be above the States", by taking advantage of the "impotent, divided and discredited" Democrats. Alas! How often this has been done since! His crowning crime was side-stepping the Republican trademark in 1864 and getting re-elected on a "Union" ticket. Yet a few inches further on Lincoln's responsibility for the Philippines in 1900 is reiterated. Moreover, "The Lincoln attitude toward the South, and the political-religious elements with which he invested it were of hidden and deep malignancy", that "had poisoned fibres and tentacles which had a tendency to become fissiparous, and to create a pathology of national hypocrisy; and this was equally true, though on a smaller scale, of the Philippine conquest of William McKinley". This because "Lincoln, more than Hamilton or Webster" vitalized the "implied powers" of the government. "Our greatest Americans are Jefferson, Whitman, Emerson" and "the praise bestowed upon Lincoln is a robbery". It is not easy to see how any of them come into the comparison.

The book is written to exploit a Southern point of view, quite honestly. He will have it that "In the war that Lincoln prosecuted and in the World War that Wilson led against Germany, . . . these Constitutional rights, so precious to liberty, not to say to the intelligent action of the people, were despised and broken". The attack of Fort Sumter, by the South Carolina forces, was "a glorious assertion of State sovereignty". When Lincoln made his second inaugural address with its malice toward none, with charity for all, "he was too saturated with the hypocrisy of Hebraic-Puritanism to realize the enormity of such blasphemy against

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human nature and human reason". Worse still: "His mind, now fed by war, and by imperial power, by intellectual arrogance completely reared out of old humilities often professed, until his dual nature no longer knew its divided self, if indeed what was insensitive and egocentric, and triple-hardened resolution, in it was not in complete possession of a manner of thinking that had been double-faced all along, many colored, but which hid its change of hue by a genius for mimesis. Was it fixed now in the black of sternest Puritanism?"

This idea is not novel in the South. Only the other day the venerable Lyon G. Tyler, President Emeritus of William and Mary, son of that John Tyler who succeeded William Henry Harrison as President eighty years ago, wrote to a Northern historical writer: "There is no aspersion of Lincoln in my Catechism except so far as his own conduct brings it upon him. My Catechism is only one of many manifestations that the public is getting tired of hearing this juggler in words hailed as a Saint, a Christ, a friend of the South, a hero greater than Washington". In proof of his feelings the old gentleman ventures to contrast Jefferson Davis thus querulously: "Did he revel in filthy anecdotes, did he change his political views for political effect, did he log-roll and trade as a legislator, and did he as President, sell offices for votes?"

It will perhaps then, be safe to regard Mr. Masters's volume as a "manifestation", unpleasant, perhaps, but one that may have a right to display itself, however much it delights those who share it.

DON C. SEITZ

LINCOLN: THE POLITICIAN *by Don C. Seitz* (COWARD-MCCANN. $4.00)

THERE is no idea here of belittling the imposing figure of Lincoln through a treatment of his career in which the emphasis is exclusively directed upon his political activities. On the contrary Mr. Seitz believes that in a time when politics has fallen into such widespread disrepute, it is worth while to recall an era when it was the true expression of American democracy and "political giants sat about the table to contest for stakes that ran high". In the brilliant company of the Civil War period Lincoln proved himself "the most consummate politician" of them all, and it is the purpose of this book to show how he played his hand in the great American game, how he made politics the instrument for achieving his high ambitions and thereafter for carrying out the great task which disunion forced upon him.

By means of copious extracts from his campaign speeches, detailed accounts of political manipulation, and a thorough examination of his relations with the other politicians of his day, Mr. Seitz takes Lincoln through his memorable career from the first unsuccessful candidature for the Illinois legislature to the Presidency. He has drawn upon many sources, though neither notes nor bibliography indicate where they are to be found, and in many instances he is able to reveal with exceptional clarity the political influences which were responsible for those changes of policy and other acts of inconsistency for which Lincoln is so often criticized. It was not weakness but strength, for example, which led him to follow the course he did in regard to the emancipation of the slaves. We tend to forget how divided the North was throughout the war and how Lincoln had to struggle to preserve as unified a front as he could even though his policy in many instances appeared to be the sacrifice of principle for political gain. Not until he became convinced that the hour for such action had come and that it would truly strengthen the North did he abandon the policy of compromise through which he had hoped to save the Union, but when the time came to reverse himself, "like the able politician he was, he reversed himself into immortality".

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There are places where Mr. Seitz's narrative becomes somewhat disjointed and confusing. His style does not greatly contribute to the smoothness and general clarity of his story. But he has written an interesting book which rightly emphasizes a side of Lincoln we are too often prone to forget.

FOSTER RHEA DULLES

MR. MILLER OF "THE TIMES" *by F. Fraser Bond* (SCRIBNER'S. $3.00)

WHEN Charles Ransom Miller's death in 1921 terminated his forty years as editor of the New York *Times*, a lifetime of anonymity flowered overnight into fame. Possibly only a few of the thousands of readers of the great daily had known the name of the man who directed its policy. But the newspaper columns which advised the world of Miller's death carried also scores of telegrams and cables from all over the world—messages recognizing the work and mourning the loss of a man who had been a great editor and a profound student of international politics, a valued friend of statesmen and presidents, a man who had held an important, if anonymous, share in the direction of world affairs.

How important his work actually was, and how clear his thinking, the present biography serves to show. Mr. Bond has given an interesting recital of the high lights of Mr. Miller's editorial career—his stand against political censorship of the press when a Senate committee attempted to investigate the *Times's* opposition to the Ship Purchase bill, the force and clarity of his war editorials, and particularly of his great editorial of December 15, 1914, entitled "For the German People, Peace With Freedom". On August 6, 1914, four days before Great Britain entered the war, Mr. Miller had ventured to predict that the conflict would result in revolution in Russia and Germany, and in the dissolution of Austria-Hungary.

In the sober, far-sighted editorial of September 16, 1918, Mr. Miller violated one of his own axioms—that an editor should never be too far in advance of his readers. In urging the acceptance by President Wilson of the first Austrian peace overtures, Miller released upon the *Times* a storm of execration which culminated in the popular charge that the editorial staff of the paper had been bought with German gold. From the time of Cleveland's first administration, Mr. Miller's relations with the White House had been extraordinarily close and cordial, and more than one president had found occasion to avail himself of the editor's accurate knowledge of foreign affairs. When, however, President Wilson chose to ignore entirely the *Times* and its comment, the paper's support of the administration continued as loyal and disinterested as ever.

Mr. Bond's biography is not solely an account of Mr. Miller's public life. He gives us an engaging portrait of young Chuck Miller, the son of generations of hard-working New England farmers, who rendered himself so remarkably useless about the farm that his parents made great sacrifices to educate him for something else. But Miller refused to profit by his opportunities—he was expelled from preparatory school, and later from Dartmouth, for general inattention to his studies and for the irritating habit of disagreeing with his professors. Upon his subsequent reinstatement at Dartmouth, he was unchastened. Yet this same young man later became a distinguished classical scholar, a fine English stylist, and one of Dartmouth's most famous graduates.

MARGARET WALLACE

ROYAL CHARLES *by David Loth* (BRENTANO. $4.00)

CHARLES THE SECOND'S passion for absolutism in government, like his passion for tolerance in religion, was scarcely the result of an accidental preference. Republicans killed his father. Parliament, after the Restoration, was the chief obstacle, as he saw it, to the reali-

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zation of his plans for the greatness of England. As to religion, it was Catholic Ireland, rather than Presbyterian Scotland, which displayed kindness and loyalty during his tribulations. Each recurrent wave of anti-Catholic or pro-Protestant feeling in the country left Charles the more disgusted with pugnacious bigotry of any sort. Dying, he sent for a priest to administer extreme unction. Dead, circumstances and his brother's wilfulness deprived him of suitable burial rites.

Laissez-faire was his inclination in all things save those immediately affecting national prosperity and prestige. To obtain and maintain these, he employed methods learned in fourteen years of exile and adversity. He lied as he had been lied to; bribed and betrayed as his enemies had bribed and betrayed—in order to conquer. He imitated his grandfather, Henry of Navarre, and sought to rule, regardless of which way the wind blew in the mountainous regions of theology and political theory. He fought the Commons and the forces behind that querulous institution, the gentry, as he fought foreign foes, the Dutch, with a kind of feminine duplicity.

Underneath his tricks there was an inflexible resolve: to build English commerce to a point where customs-revenue would support the throne, make it independent of Parliamentary financial control. He failed in direct warfare with the Netherlands. But he was triumphant when, having ingeniously transferred the burden of actual military conflict to France, he promptly constrained English ships to sail where only Dutch ships had sailed before. With enlarged commerce came wealth, abundant wealth for the nation and for the King. When he vanished from the scene, Charles was absolute. He was also popular as few kings had been before or have been since. His political work was ephemeral because it was unsuited to the new age which his death ushered in.

The present facile biography makes no pretence of scientific solidity. The pages are undocumented, except in conversational fashion. The author's neglect or omission of vital sequences in European political, economic, religious, and cultural life at this time, tends to reduce the narrative to statement of engaging anecdotes and illustration of personal idiosyncrasy.

ARMAND BURKE

LORD JOHN RUSSELL *by A. Wyatt Tilby* (R. R. SMITH. $5.00)

SUBTITLED "A Study in Civil and Religious Liberty", A. Wyatt Tilby's *Lord John Russell* is the portrait of a period rather than of a man. For half a century Lord John, Whig and Liberal, had an active and important part in the history not only of England but of the world. To the more generous and ardent spirits of his time, liberty was not only a kind of universal panacea, but a goddess to be worshipped without stint or question. And when two kinds of liberty stood in sharp conflict, as they seemed to do during the American Civil War, many conscientious souls were sorely puzzled. Slavery they believed altogether wrong; but the right of secession seemed to them almost incontrovertible. Lord John was one of those who suffered most from divided sympathies. Direct, honest, absolutely and completely sincere, he had ardently espoused the cause of liberty from the days of his youth. He was the author of more than one Reform Bill; he was also the author of the famous "No Popery" letter. He was born a Whig and a Liberal, and a Whig and a Liberal he died. In these days when the blessings of liberty and democracy seem to many so very dubious, it is interesting to read of one who, born in a simpler, less sceptical time, was able to believe the ballot the best possible tonic for the body politic. Mr. Tilby's entertaining book is written in a style at once suave and ironic, with much deft phrasing which not infrequently conveys a sting.

LOUISE MAUNSELL FIELD

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DUMAS: FATHER AND SON *by Francis Gribble* (DUTTON. $5.00)

THIS book should have had the subtitle of "Grandfather, Father, and Son", for General Dumas, the mulatto father of the author of *The Three Musketeers*, is discussed far more than casually. It was an extraordinary brood—the progeny of the Marquis Davy de la Pailleterie and his mistress, the San Domingan negress, Marie Dumas. Of them only Alexandre *père* was legitimate, and this fact, added to that of their African blood, had its effect upon their genius. Francis Gribble has not attempted to write a history of the Dumas family, or even to give psychological interpretation of their characteristics or any critical analysis of their writings. His book is quite frankly gossip regarding the doings of the three members of the family, and when the author does occasionally try to solve a really important problem, such as the indebtedness of Alexander *père* to his collaborators and especially to Auguste Macquet, his reasonings are superficial. Mr. Gribble leaves us with the impression that it was Macquet who really wrote *The Three Musketeers, The Count of Monte Cristo,* and all the other important novels; but the fact that Macquet has left nothing which is remembered, while a large portion of what Dumas put his name to bears the signature of personality, and, moreover, has lasted, puts common sense as a potent ally on the side of those who believe that Dumas was always the informing genius of the works which bear his name.

Yet taken as gossip the book is amusing, and the anecdotes, whether true or false (and often Mr. Gribble confesses that he doesn't know which they are) are decidedly enlightening. Naturally the best part of the volume has to do with Dumas *père*, whose extravagant life and words are quite up Mr. Gribble's street. Delicious is the account of Dumas's returning home and finding his wife in the company of his friend, Roger de Beauvoir, and equally delightful are the examples of his extravagant delight in uniforms and decorations. Here we see the African not far removed from the jungles. But Dumas was French too, and had French *esprit*, as proved by his editorial note in his newspaper the day after his whole staff had resigned in a body: "We have good news for our readers. All my collaborators have just tendered their resignations. There is consequently no longer any reason why everybody should not subscribe". That could have been written only by a Frenchman! So those who like amusing gossip about genius will revel in Mr. Gribble's volume.

GRENVILLE VERNON

MASTER OF MANHATTAN: THE LIFE OF RICHARD CROKER *by Lothrop Stoddard* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $3.50)

ANYONE who is shocked by the vice scandals in New York City or the municipal politics of Chicago would be well advised to ponder carefully this biography of the greatest of Tammany's "bosses". Modern Manhattan is pure as a lily in comparison to the time when Big Bill Devery was Chief of Police and Big Tim Sullivan and Monk Eastman led the pimps and criminals of the East Side in the war against reform.

Croker was a comparatively honest man. He had much of the temper and ability of a Parnell and, like Parnell, came of dour Irish stock. He came to New York as a child in 1846, when the city was practically a gigantic frontier community. He grew up with the New York gangs, was an alderman at twenty-five, and in 1885 took over supreme control of Tammany Hall from John Kelly.

He mastered himself and mastered Tammany and waged a long and fascinating struggle with Platt, the Republican Boss, for the control of the richest political loot in Christendom. Croker won magnificently in smashing Hewitt and the County Democracy in 1892. He capitalized the hatred of New

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York for up-state interference in the famous "To Hell With Reform" election of 1897, when

> The chief cause of that revulsion was that the people bitterly resented "strict enforcement" of laws against Sunday liquor-selling and gambling.

He grew great and rich on "honest graft" and proved that not only is "politics impossible without the spoils", but that "it can be made to pay like a bank". Then Croker reached above himself. He fought for Bryan in 1900, only to see Bryan badly beaten. The end came shortly afterwards in the bitter Fusion election of 1901, when Seth Low and Jerome on an Anti-Vice ticket beat a Tammany which was dominated by the rising power of Big Tim Sullivan. Croker simply remarked that "a change is a good thing sometimes; but Tammany Hall will be here when we are all gone". He retired to his country place in Ireland and proceeded to breed a horse, Orby, which won the Derby in 1907, at odds of one hundred to nine. He died in 1921.

It is impossible to read the career of this grim, silent and powerful figure without comparing the Tammany which he ruled with the later institution and with the Chicago machine. Tammany taught discipline, loyalty, gave promotion by merit, made a science of politics and a religion of human nature. It still does and hence survives defeats which would wreck a merely opportunist political body. Only when Tammany fell under the shadow of the Capones of the day did it go down to the shadow, and it always emerged resilient and refreshed by contact with the real people of the city it controlled.

Another significance resides in this study of a "Boss", and that is that, unless American "farmers"—up-State, down-State or Trans-Mississippi—learn not to interfere with the pleasures, habits and amusements of the city (so long as they are kept within the bounds of orderliness), the rapid urbanization of American society is rapidly preparing the nation for political domination by municipal bosses and machines. Mr. Stoddard points out that the city "was long regarded as something unworthy of statesmanlike consideration". The Federal Constitution was based on country life. The result has been a Jefferson, a Jackson, or a Lincoln in Washington. It has also been a Tweed, a Croker, a Capone, a Vare or a Murphy in our cities. And unless the country takes thought for the morrow, it may find the supply of Lincolns and Jeffersons drying up, and the nation administered by the hard-boiled and disillusioned Crokers, who play for their own pockets and make politics "pay like a bank".

JOHN CARTER

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POETRY

THE SONNETS OF FREDERICK GODDARD TUCKERMAN *edited with an introductory essay by Witter Bynner* (KNOPF. $2.50)

THIS volume revives the best part of the work of a neglected American poet. Frederick Tuckerman, scion (as the phrase used to be) of a distinguished Boston family, published a book of poems in the sixties. There were three American editions, 1860, 1864, and 1869, and in 1863 an edition appeared in England. Emerson wrote with enthusiasm of the book, and printed one of the verse-narratives it contained in his anthology, *Parnassus*. Tennyson entertained the author during a visit abroad, and liked both the man and his work. But the volume seems to have gone unregarded since, despite an attempt by Walter Prichard Eaton, in an article in the *Forum* in 1909, to plead against oblivion for its remarkable merits.

Mr. Bynner has performed his editorial task with understanding. He wisely decided not to reprint Tuckerman's work entire. He has confined the text to the sonnets, including many not hitherto published. The sonnets are the most personal, original, and gifted of Tuckerman's poems, and those on which his claim to permanence rests. But in his excellent introduction, Mr. Bynner has quoted stanzas, lines, and images from the other verses, and even one or two poems entire, where premonitory sparks of Tuckerman's real faculty flashed out. Thus a sufficient account of the poet's life and all of his work that is valuable are now contained in a convenient and very attractive volume.

Tuckerman attained distinction in botany and astronomy—hobbies which he pursued almost as professions. His wide and minute knowledge of nature beautifully appears in his poems. His sonnets are extremely personal, the direct and intense voice of his own perturbed and reclusive mind. In this he is sharply at contrast with the more conventional and more famous poetry of his time. If he is to have a permanent station in American letters, he adds one to the celebrated company of nineteenth-century writers who avoided the world, and lived to themselves in seclusion. He is much more of the stripe of Emily Dickinson, Thoreau, and Hawthorne than of Longfellow or Lowell. The intensely personal character of his sonnets may well have accounted in considerable measure for their neglect. Remembering the bulk of American poetry of the period, we may well be startled to hear a voice addressing us from mid-century in these terms:

Today I heard a sweet voice carolling
In the wood-land paths, with laugh and careless cry
Leading her happy mates. Apart I stepped;
And while the laugh and song went lightly by,
In the wild bushes I sat down and wept.

I think it must be admitted that Tuckerman is naturally a poet, and speaks with a high accent. The movement of his lines has a fine breadth, vigor, and dignity which make the reader prick up his ears at once with the sense that something important is being said. The force and beauty of his imagery bespeaks again and again the poet by native right and instinct, the poet who has learned his accent from high sources and from his own powerful needs. It is of no importance that he rhymed his sonnets irregularly; rather it testifies to his natural strength and his hon-

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estly personal use of the form that he could make free with its conventions without destroying its essential character.

Although I concur in admiration of Tuckerman's work, I do not think that the final and united impression of his sonnets is commensurate with the separate qualities in them which it is impossible not to praise. Some ultimate hindrance prevents their full success. I think it is in part that their intellectual promise remains unfulfilled. Tuckerman often starts off on a fine intellectual track; but in the end the effect remains cloudy. He never quite does what in his second sonnet he pledges himself to do:

Wherefore with this belief held like a blade,
Gathering my strength and purpose fair and slow,
I wait, resolved to carry it to the heart
Of that dark doubt in one collected blow.

These are fine lines, but so far as I can detect, the "one collected blow" remains undelivered. I do not mean that Tuckerman fails to score a logical triumph over some shadowy adversary, but that a certain cloudiness and anti-climax on the reflective side of his work militate against him.

Tuckerman's sonnets are the voice of a troubled mind. But often his grief seems both insufficiently universal and insufficiently caused. His wife died in childbirth, and those sonnets that speak directly of her loss command deep respect. But frequently his emotion seems to be not so much grief as mere gloominess, morbidity springing from private and personal sources, vexation with life into which an alien reader cannot easily penetrate. When he says, "Apart I stepped", the reader's instinctive "Why?" goes unanswered. And so the consequent line, with all its fascination of simplicity and beautiful movement,

In the wild bushes, I sat down and wept,

does not seem to lie very central to the world's experience.

For these reasons (at least they are the best reasons I can give for what is, after all, not a question of reason) I cannot agree with Witter Bynner that Tuckerman's sonnets "rank with the noblest in the language". That he is "a poet permanently important in any literature" I suspect is also too high a strain of praise, although nearer the truth. That he is an original and gifted poet, with great strength and beauty of imagination, there is no denying, and it seems past doubt that those who write of American poetry in the future will accord him a place of genuine honor. When he asks

Or hast thou mused what giveth the craft that makes
The twirling spider at once invisible,
And the spermal odour to the barberry flower?

Or when he concludes a sonnet with the lines

As the night-heron wading in the swamp
Lights up the pools with her phosphoric breast

one is inclined to subscribe to almost any praise of him. But I am afraid that such lines, evidences of his great natural poetic endowment, are evidence also that he is better in parts than in the whole.

THEODORE MORRISON

THE POEMS OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS *edited with notes by Robert Bridges* (OXFORD. $3.00)

SMALL wonder it is that the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins have already aroused the enthusiasm of a small but very select and extremely ardent group of admirers, for they create a language, make use of rhythms, and draw upon themes to which, shockingly new as they would have been in Hopkins's day, we have been introduced and in some cases accustomed by our contemporary idols. Among the first to welcome the work of this English Jesuit must be counted those who had earlier rallied to the support of T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Gertrude Stein. For

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this reason it is perhaps fortunate that these poems did not appear until almost thirty years after their author's death. Robert Bridges's publication of his friend's verses in 1918—and to a lesser degree this second edition—is a literary event of almost equal importance to Paul Valéry's emergence from his twenty-years' silence with *La Jeune Parque*.

Of Hopkins's obscurity too much has already been said, first by himself and his friends who discouraged publication during his lifetime and more recently by his critics. Like many another great writer he merely had to wait for the world to catch up with him. True, he distorts language constantly to pack his thought more densely or to meet the requirements of his metre or rime, using words in their secondary meanings, omitting conjunctions, pronouns, or verbs; but a careful reading and re-reading (such as all poetry is entitled to and contemporary poetry in particular has been obliged to *force* upon us) yields at once the poet's thought and the justification of his tortured syntax. Beginning with the more direct verses in "The May Magnificat", "Binsey Poplars", or "The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe" and progressing through the more compact sonnets to such overwhelmingly radical experiments as "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" and "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo", no one of discernment could fail to be won over to Hopkins. It is altogether advisable, besides, to ignore at first (if not forever) his own remarks on his metrical innovations, for when not downright misleading they are most often confusing. One can easily feel throughout his poems a conscious striving for musical effects: an intelligent if not always successful use of devices peculiar to music to achieve certain relations of sounds and rhythms that will create a given emotion. And this effort really calls for no technical explanation.

Hopkins's customary "devices", such as alliteration, repetition, and interior rime, almost always have an air of inevitability about them, as if demanded by the thought he is expressing. Their source lies often obviously in a free association of ideas; they are never useless and very rarely recherché:

Earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable, ' vaulty, voluminous, . . . stupendous
Evening strains to be time's vast, ' womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night.

or these lines from "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo":

Yes I can tell such a key, I do know such a place,
Where whatever's prized and passes of us, everything that's fresh and fast flying of us, seems to us sweet of us and swiftly away with, done away with, undone,
Undone, done with, soon done with, and yet dearly and dangerously sweet
Of us, the wimpled-water-dimpled, not-by-morning-matchèd face,
The flower of beauty, fleece of beauty, too apt to, ah! to fleet,
Never fleets móre, fastened with the tenderest truth
To its own best being and its loveliness of youth: it is an everlastingness of, O it is an all youth!
Come then, your ways and airs and looks, locks, maiden gear, gallantry and gaiety and grace,
Winning ways, airs innocent, maiden manners, sweet looks, loose locks, long locks, lovelocks, gaygear, going gallant, girlgrace—
Resign them, sign them, seal them, send them, motion them with breath,
And with sigh soaring, soaring síghs deliver them

Sometimes such effects lead up to a sudden shock of tremendous force as in the following lines:

self ín self steepèd and páshed—quíte
Disremembering, dísmémbering ' áll now.

Again in the sonnet called "Carrion Comfort", perhaps his greatest poem:

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Cheer whom though? the hero whose heaven-
handling flung me, fóot tród
Me? or me that fought him? O which one? is it
each one? That night, that year
Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling
with (my God!) my God.

Let anyone who questions the legitimacy of the effects achieved in this sonnet compare it with certain passages in Francis Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven* and then judge which is the stronger handling of the subject.

No Jesuit poet could escape being labelled a mystic; Chesterton might say that if Hopkins is a mystic he is indeed a Jesuit among Franciscans. The "dark night of the soul" is here in abundance, but there is very little of that serene and expansive communion with God and nature which marks the mystic's goal. A large number of these poems reflect the same problem with which Paul Valéry has grappled—with this great difference: that Hopkins is more passionate, less urbane, than the French poet. The suffering is invariably psychological: the poet plunges into his innermost mind and endures the horror of seeing himself see himself (*je me voyais me voir*):

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them
cheap
May who ne'er hung there.

(*Sonnet 45*)

I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep
decree
Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me.

(*Sonnet 41*)

. . . of a rack
Where, selfwrung, selfsprung, sheathe- and shel-
terless, ' thóughts agáinst thoughts ín
groans grínd.

(*Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves*)

Like Keats he calls out, "Oh, for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts!"

Soul, self; come, poor Jackself, I do advise
You, jaded, let be; call off thoughts awhile
Elsewhere.

(*Sonnet 47*)

This preoccupation with his own introspection and his constant intellectual frustration is the keynote of Hopkins's poetry, explaining his stiff technique, his tangled syntax, and his cumulative cacophony which often surpasses that of Browning's "Popularity". He considered himself "soft sift in an hourglass" or "time's eunuch" building nothing to endure. There lies the tragedy of his short life and, though it is barely hinted at in Father Lahey's biography, it can clearly be read in his verses. His experiments often led to "queerness" (as he referred to his obscurity); sometimes they even resulted in clumsiness. Wherever we place him, we cannot but recognize that he was "barbarous in beauty" and admire heartily "the achieve of, the master of the thing!"

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

POETRY AND THE CRITICISM OF LIFE *by H. W. Garrod* (HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS. $2.00)

THIS new volume by Professor Garrod, containing his lectures as Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard, illustrates the eternal law that the lecture which is agreeable to listen to when delivered from a platform does not always make good reading. The sentence which provokes the too quick laughter of the audience, the local allusion inserted to please loyal citizens, need not be preserved for the benefit of a reading public. More objectionable still is Professor Garrod's manner of punctuating almost every sentence with a personal qualification: "I do not mean——"; "I have the fancy that——"; "I should make bold to say——"; "I were a prig else——"; "may I say it?" Pages literally sprinkled with this familiarity of the platform might be endurable if the matter so sprinkled were of such ponderous weight that the lecturer is hard put to it to carry his audience and his subject together. Yet in these lectures there is nothing ponderous or even of much weight.

The first lecture bears the title of the volume. Others are on Matthew Arnold as poet and critic, Emerson, Clough, *The Testament of Beauty*, and finally *Methods of Criticism in Poetry*. The most disappointing is the one on Emerson, which boils down to illustration of the statement that Emerson is "an inspired naturalist of the human soul" and "a great literary artist". Professor Garrod's treatment of Arnold is hardly more satisfying. Arnold's Marguerite he finds "almost as intriguing as Wordsworth's Lucy". He admits that Arnold's prose may lack masculinity; "at least the he-men of literature do not write like this". But listen to his praise. After saying that Arnold is something of a poseur and that some of his effects are stagy, Professor Garrod accounts for Arnold's distinction by saying that he is so extraordinarily enjoyable. "He is", he writes, "enjoyable almost everywhere; and a part of the enjoyment is . . . the delight which we derive from a finely adjusted pose." If this is the best that can be said today of Arnold, he lived in vain.

Of course he did not live in vain. Professor Garrod, for one, is indebted to Arnold's influence, although Arnold himself might not recognize the disciple. When Arnold attempted to make culture serve as a corrective for the extravagance and definiteness of religious creeds, he actually, though without intending it, gave impetus and authority to a movement which deprived creeds of their definiteness in the name of liberalism, the eloquent mask of indifference. Today it is no new thing to be told that Jews, Catholics, and Protestants are all brothers serving the same end in their various ways, that creeds are unnatural barriers set up to encourage quarrels about unimportant subjects. It is however a new thing to be told that all critics are brothers, that their creeds are as meaningless as those of outworn religions. Yet this is in effect Professor Garrod's argument as expressed in *Methods of Criticism in Poetry*. The argument runs something like this: The first end of the critic is to be interesting and to please. It is not to discover the best which has been thought and said in the world, and if the critic happens to make such discovery his distinction lies not in the substance of his work but in its manner. "I cannot but feel," writes Professor Garrod, "that

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we look at criticism in too fussy a spirit, not sufficiently appreciating its freedoms and securities. . . . We should be better critics, I fancy, if we more often thought of criticism as, over the far greater part of it, a field of infinite delight in which our talents and our ingenuities may wander harmlessly."

After urging the world to take criticism easy, Professor Garrod shows that critical schools, like religious sects, though be it said he does not make the comparison, quarrel over nothing. He becomes stern for a moment when he speaks of his own belief in the eternal laws of poetry, but it is a mild sternness we discover when we read that these laws cannot be ignored even if we want to ignore them. The self-expressionist, who is of all critics the most interesting, presumes to deny the very existence of these laws. This denial is an error of sect. No man can express merely himself. "Very few of us know", says Professor Garrod, "how empty our minds are." We must express the world, our age, our environment, and the poet it is who expresses something known as world-consciousness. "That, in fact, is what makes it possible to speak of the laws of poetry at all, and to think of them as living entities." The connection here between being interesting and expressing the living entities of the law is left conveniently vague, and no attempt is made to distinguish degrees of interest or even to define the term. Perhaps like the laws of poetry these are things one cannot help knowing.

This doctrine will not be very consoling to those critics who have always supposed themselves mighty opposites. Tell Professor Lowes and Professor Babbitt that they are both wandering harmlessly over a field of infinite delight and that a lifetime's effort to define the limits and aims of criticism is of value only in so far as it is interesting. Tell them that their attempts to analyze judgment, the poetic imagination, are idle metaphysical speculations. They are likely to remain unconvinced of the error of their ways and they might feel that easy phrases like world-consciousness and eternal verities do not solve all difficulties. They both know too well the implications of their own positions and each respects the other's position too much to be taken in by talk about a criticism which is a matter of personal ingenuity, even though that criticism, whether by will or not, is concerned with the eternal laws of poetry.

THEODORE BAIRD

SHAKESPEARE'S PROBLEM COMEDIES *by William Witherle Lawrence* (MACMILLAN. $3.00)

AFTER Wilson Knight's recent and novel interpretation of Shakespeare's tragedies, we are conveniently provided by Professor Lawrence of Columbia University with a new point of view in regard to four of his comedies. *All's Well that Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida,* and the first acts of *Cymbeline* are the problem comedies which present "a serious and realistic treatment of a distressing complication in human life, but without a tragic outcome" and which are removed from tragi-comedy by virtue of their high seriousness and their lack of theatricality. The plays are here examined in the light of their historical and social groundwork, and we are invited to consider the combination of Elizabethan conceptions and medieval survivals which suggested their themes to Shakespeare and made popular with a contemporary audience what seems only ridiculous to our modern taste. The plot of *All's Well,* which Professor Lawrence divides into "the fulfillment of the tasks" and the "healing of the king", belongs to the general type of virtue story known as "The Clever Wench" and comes from Boccaccio. Both themes were familiar to Shakespeare's public, which looked upon Helena as quite justified in her conduct, both in the winning of Bertram and in her manner of fulfilling his conditions. For the main story of *Measure for Measure,* the dramatist

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drew upon Giraldi Cinthio and Whetstone, adding one important element, the "bed trick", undoubtedly suggested by the success of the similar incident in *All's Well*. And according to Elizabethan convention, Mariana, like Helena, was fully justified in yielding to Angelo because of her formal betrothal to him. The importance given to the Duke is also original with Shakespeare. Similarly the wager theme in *Cymbeline* was a commonplace of medieval story-telling that goes back through Boccaccio and Old French romances to a Greek popular song. In none of these comedies does Shakespeare depart from the current interpretation of these popular themes; Professor Lawrence has adequately proved that in his age there could have been nothing revolting or even unnatural in such situations. This critic also contests the general opinion of commentators on the final group of plays or "idyllic romances" with the conclusion that they are a mixture of sunny romance and the gloomiest realism and that consequently they merely continue the mood of the problem plays. He protests against the theory of Dowden, Brandes, and Sidney Lee that "after a happy youth and a gloomy middle age Shakespeare reached at last a state of quiet serenity in which he died"; his thesis, which he and Professor Thorndike have advanced before, is that the change of tone in Shakespeare's work is to be traced rather to the varying literary fashions of his day.

SWINBURNE AND BAUDELAIRE *by Harold Nicolson* (OXFORD. $.70)

THERE has been prepared by Harold Nicolson, the author of many studies of French and English poetry, a brief lecture on the relations between Swinburne and Baudelaire, indicating the curious correspondence between their two natures and the similarities between their early experiences, and trying to account for the fact that the great Frenchman had only a passing influence upon Swinburne. The answer Mr. Nicolson believes to be found not in Swinburne's early becoming insensitive to literary inspiration, but rather in the fact that Baudelaire and Swinburne were temperamentally akin while they differed vastly in the "quality of their intelligence". The master was too profound for his superficial imitator and as the latter ceased to be a poet, "the memory of Baudelaire became for Swinburne a painful centre of self-criticism and self-reproach". Mr. Nicolson's conclusion is quite legitimate; in fact it seems self-evident from the first without necessity of proof or even statement.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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A VARIED SHELF

LEIGH HUNT'S "EXAMINER" EXAMINED *by Edmund Blunden* (HARPERS. $4.00)

THIS book appeared in England in 1928, and Blunden's comprehensive biography of Hunt (of which he speaks in the preface to the present volume as though it were still in prospect) has appeared subsequently. It is a good book, performing a useful service and containing much delightful and valuable matter. John and Leigh Hunt began to issue the *Examiner* in 1808, and Leigh Hunt's connection with it continued until 1825, when he returned to England after his discouraging Italian sojourn (the success of which was doomed at the outset by the death of Shelley) to find that his brother no longer considered him one of the proprietors of the paper.

The *Examiner* was the most notable of the surprising number of journalistic projects with which Leigh Hunt had to do in the course of his incredibly industrious and unlucky life. Its attack on the Regent (George IV) and the politics of the Napoleonic period brought several prosecutions, and resulted in the famous conviction and sentence of John and Leigh Hunt to separate jails for two years. Hunt in jail was a charming, witty, courageous, and on the whole comfortable martyr, who enjoyed the admiring visits of friends, writers, and liberals all the way from Lamb to Byron. There was little to presage the later life of the often vilified, often derided, always poverty-stricken, and always toiling man who lived to be caricatured by Dickens and who greeted the young genius of Tennyson, as he had that of Keats and Shelley, with generous enthusiasm and discernment.

The pages of the *Examiner* yield Blunden a good deal of treasure, surprisingly fresh and unrusted after a century. What imagination and gusto animated Hunt's journalism, how ineffably gifted it seems by comparison with the journalism of to-day! Much of it was devoted to personal abuse and attack, which our contemporary taste perhaps rightly condemns. Yet we have become too mealy-mouthed, and might well profit by some outright speaking. As a piece of imaginative vilification, take Hunt's premonitory vision of Southey's funeral, in which the ironic cortège was arranged in complete order, all because he disliked Southey's politics. It began with

> A Corporal and File of Soldiers
> to clear the way,
> Penny trumpets, two and two,
> Jacobins with their coats turned—

and continued through an elaborate parade to

> Empty Carriages of the Ministers
> and Court,
> Hirelings on Horseback—

which duly brought up the rear. Space fails to mention many incidental delights which Blunden culls from the *Examiner*. There was, for example, the panegyric on Miss Tree's leg (Hunt was a great dramatic critic, as this excerpt alone conclusively shows) written in the course of an article on *Twelfth Night* at Covent Garden. "We must be allowed to say that Miss Tree's leg is the very prettiest leg we ever saw on the stage. It is not at all like the leg which is vulgarly praised even in a man, and which is doubly misplaced under a lady—a bit of a balustrade turned upside down. . . . It is a right feminine leg, delicate in foot, trim in ankle, and

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with a calf at once soft and well-cut, distinguished and unobtrusive. . . . It is fit for a statue; still fitter for where it is. . . ."

The first part of Blunden's book is a series of notes, year by year, upon the *Examiner's* contents; mainly the literary, dramatic, and artistic contents. The second part contains selections by or about Leigh Hunt, Lamb, Shelley, Keats, and Bryon, including several agreeable trifles attributed to Lamb for the first time. Here is contained entire the celebrated editorial on "Young Poets" which announced Keats and Shelley to the world; and here are Hunt's brilliant reviews (from the *Examiner* and the *Indicator*, sometimes virtually a literary supplement to the *Examiner*) of successive volumes by Keats and Shelley, together with his rejoinders to the *Quarterly's* attacks on them. The present reviewer considers these papers as good criticism of Keats and Shelley as he has ever seen within equal limits, and all the more astounding because it is contained in notices contemporary almost to the minute. It is an equal matter for surprise that these *Examiner* papers have never before been reprinted entire. (They have, of course, been quoted and alluded to frequently enough.) They place Hunt high in the ranks of criticism and higher still in the ranks of generosity and fine friendship. They establish again and on a firmer footing his character as "the friend of genius".

THEODORE MORRISON

AMULETS AND SUPERSTITIONS *by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge* (OXFORD. $12.00)

SOME six years after his retirement as Keeper of the Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities of the British Museum, Sir E. Wallis Budge has compiled a ready answerer to questions in the field of magic. This latest short cut to learning surpasses *Dr. Cadman's Counsel* in that the answers are based on scholarly investigations, and it is more readable than Ripley's *Believe It or Not* in that it provides a logical and integrated survey of its field. As an aid to reference a fifty-page index is included, though it must be confessed that in spite of its verbal rather than analytic organization it is neither complete nor entirely reliable. Bibliographical notes are given in the text, some of them surprisingly recent and some hoary with age. The style is lighter than the format of the book would suggest —it is even garrulous—but as full of erudition as one would expect in a compendium by a scholar who has been knighted for his learning. Twenty-two plates show the occasional beauty of the amulets discussed, among them the Persian scrolls and the Christian crucifixes; and the three hundred additional illustrations provide valuable sources of reference, as in the case of the drawings of fifty-seven Egyptian divinities with their symbols.

The reader will probably not go far without wondering just where amulets and superstitions give way to faith and cult accessories, and where belief in the supernatural becomes rational fostering of memory. Is there no essential difference between amulets and rosaries and wedding rings? Wallis Budge in his detached sympathy for all forms of human experience would probably grant differences, but continue to lump them together all the same on the basis of association of ideas, and perhaps this tolerance is legitimate in a popular book of reference.

Less understandable is the limited space given to classical beliefs and practices. To say that they are outside the writer's own field is hardly cogent in the light of some of the material he finds space for. One would have liked, for example, a discussion of the Evil Eye and the Medusa legend, or of the figure of Athena on the frieze of the Pergamon altar, where she seems to be killing a Giant with a glance. Further, the occult investigations of several American classicists might well have merited attention. The studies of Tavenner on *bullae*, and of McCartney on Weather Signs, and of Johnson on Cursive Tablets come to mind in this connection.

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On the other hand, the layman who has occasion to look up the significance of a stone or the meaning of a life-line in *Amulets and Superstitions* will have a delightful time browsing in the esoteric world here unfolded. Alive as he no doubt will be to the practical concerns of our present year of grace, he will learn that white jade has prophylactic power against intestinal influenza, that the Hebrews used amulets which insured business prosperity, that certain letters enable the accused to preserve a "fair countenance" in the court-room, that means are known to arouse sleepy oxen to the benefit of the farmer, and that whether he be a dweller in New York or in Chicago there are protectives against both racketeer and gunman. The Wise Men of the East, he will find, even provided protection against the evils of drunkenness, but not, alas, of Prohibition.

WILLIAM SENER RUSK

A PAGAN'S PILGRIMAGE *by Llewelyn Powys* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.50)

If the pilgrimage of each age to the Holy Land may serve as an index to what the age thinks of the Christian tradition, *A Pagan's Pilgrimage* by Llewelyn Powys should be of interest as an index to contemporary thought. The present volume is essentially a sequel to *The Cradle of God*, in which, while rejecting Christianity as incompatible with "a clear and enlightened vision of life", the author dealt, not without stylistic charm, with the magnetic personality of Jesus. Doubtless many readers will feel that *A Pagan's Pilgrimage* suffers from endeavoring to be two very different things at once—a materialist's and monist's irascible diatribe against a dualistic Christianity; and a picturesque travel book, recording a poet's vivid impressions not only of the Holy Land but also of Athens, Cyprus, Rhodes and Capri. One infers from the beginning and the end, proclaiming matter as the only reality, that Mr. Powys is himself primarily concerned with philosophy. In the main, his philosophy is a sort of grave-digger's version, lurid and somewhat melodramatic, of Locke's sensationalism, touched at times by the haunting beauty of Keats and Pater. Mr. Powys tells us that during his twenty-year fight against tuberculosis "blood never came from my chest without my concluding for a certainty that now at last the end of my protracted reprieve has arrived", and we can thus understand and sympathize with his deeply emotional yearning for the dualistic faith of the Christian tradition which he views as "a subtle method of escape from pain", from the "trap" of matter, enabling mankind to "approach with more confidence the room of death". It is evident, however, that, like so many contemporary liberals, he began his pilgrimage with somewhat dogmatic and narrow views, affirming that "the evidence of the senses cannot fall very far short of what is absolute reality". The materialist, prejudiced from the start, seems to imply, at least, that one may test the validity of a dualistic outlook by examining the traces of Jesus's "earthly sojournings". The Grave of God turns out to be "nothing, the veriest chicanery, a prinked-up conjuring trick"; there was, Mr. Powys concludes, no Resurrection, "no reviving", the story of Easter morning being an "ancient piece of graveyard hearsay". Like other naturalists who deplore dogmatism and the lack of liberal sympathy, Mr. Powys dismisses the Christian tradition as "childish chat", "a rotten and twisted branch", "a toadstool of suffering". "We thrive on cozenage as nanny goats and quails on the poison of hellebore." Although, as the title indicates, the book purports to substitute for Christianity a vague paganism, it is significant that the greatest of the pagans, who forever stressed the dualism between the One and the Many, is dismissed as a "mouth of mischief" voicing "canting deceptions". No, this book has more in common with a decadent naturalism than with the great classical tradition, inspiring courage and serenity.

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For, like the work of most naturalistic monists who found life upon sensation, *A Pagan's Pilgrimage* is written in the shadow of one dark obsession: the obsession of transience and death. "Bones and skulls, skulls and bones—we must all come to it—the vivid impressions that we get, gone in a moment, our treasured sensations as though they had not been! For all breathing life there is no other reality than what was here represented, skulls with eye-sockets filled with mud!" Thus, ultimately, to one who founds life upon matter,—ironically enough!—"nothing matters". At the end, the dogmatic materialist gazes wistfully into a volcano's "steaming caldron" of "boiling mud", and concludes:

> It was like watching primordial matter at work before ever there was a mind to contemplate it. Against the turgid jorum of mud the accidental irrelevance of human life became plain, the accidental relevance of all life. Here was the basic slime unredeemed. . . . What force, what power, was here, and how unconcerned, and how pitiless!

Thus *A Pagan's Pilgrimage* is one more scarcely-needed testimony of the morbid despair bred by a naturalistic monist's view of man as a chaos of sensations submerged in the blind law of nature, by a denial of those precious attributes which transcend matter, which represent the distinguishing quality of humanity, and which—in place of stultifying determinism and futility—give mankind purposeful direction and inner satisfaction. Mr. Powys's title should not blind us to the fact that his wisdom is essentially that of such contemporaries as O'Neill and Cabell. The first has embroidered the theme that "everything in life is so contemptuously accidental", has prayed, vicariously, "Oh, God, so deaf and dumb and blind! . . . teach me to be resigned to be an atom!" And the second has concluded, in his incomparably and delicately artistic way, that man is "an ape who chatters to himself of kinship with the archangels while filthily he digs for groundnuts", "a parasite infesting the epidermis of a midge among planets", or—as the urbane Virginian gentleman remarks elsewhere—man is only a bubble in fermenting swill. At best, Mr. Powys assures us, we may aspire—although vainly—to a sort of vegetative felicity: "We mammals can never hope to emulate the gentle civilization of the vegetable world". He has at least kept faith with his readers and fulfilled the promise aroused by his description of himself as "one who prides himself upon his acquaintance with the actual matter-of-fact earth and has no disposition for meddling with affairs transacted above the height of an ox when he stands with the sun on his hide in the middle of a pasture".

If one considers the book not as a philosophic statement but as travelogue, he can be, I am glad to say, much more charitable. As in the case of naturalists such as Keats and Pater, Mr. Powys's devotion to the life of the senses has esthetic compensations and often results in a closeness of observation inspiring a considerable charm of imagery, in a felicitous choice of words to evoke atmosphere and cadence, and in a singular capacity to render contagious his delight in beauty of a sensuous order. "The lust I have for the visible world", he remarks, "leads me to examine very closely every scrap of matter that I come upon." The reader can perhaps judge from the following illustration as to the success of the author's endeavor to create what one might call "sound pictures in technicolor":

> The sun was hot upon our shoulders. Everywhere bright colours struck against our sight. All at once a loud sound broke the noonday hour, a sound insistent and resonant as a bell. It was the voice of a man. We looked up and there on a platform encircling the top of a minaret was the muezzin calling Mohammedans to prayer. . . . There against the dome of the firmament, blue and wide and fathomless, stood this living dot. We could see he was bending like a snake, touching his hands first to his

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temples and then to his loins. Every atom, every electron, in that cloudless sky was quivering with sunshine.

Certainly one must accord Mr. Powys considerable merit as a picture-painter in words, although readers of Lessing will doubtless raise the question as to whether, after all, picture-painting is the highest function of words. One cannot forbear reflecting regretfully upon how effective the author's work might have been, considering his native gifts as a stylist, had his power as a thinker and artist not been short-circuited by a decadent and stultifying naturalism.

HARRY HAYDEN CLARK

INDIA: LAND OF THE BLACK PAGODA *by Lowell Thomas* (CENTURY. $4.00)

THE LIVES OF A BENGAL LANCER *by Major F. Yeats-Brown.* (VIKING. $2.75)

Two new books on India, written respectively by an Englishman and an American on the same trip, form a striking contrast in national and personal point of view, and together compose an extraordinarily vivid and complete picture.

The prolific Mr. Lowell Thomas interviews India as he interviewed Lawrence of Arabia, Count Luckner and Captain Lauterbach. His familiar journalistic style has endeared him to thousands of running readers of ready-made romance. The sly nudge of a British general in Jerusalem supplied the incentive for his pilgrimage to the Black Pagoda at Kanarak to see the most obscene sculpture in the world. Accompanied by an expert photographer (Mr. Harry Chase) he set out for a two months' trip. But India had more than one news story to tell, and the journey was lengthened to two years.

The British government contributed to the expedition the invaluable services of Major Francis Yeats-Brown, an English officer of Indian cavalry steeped in the language and customs of the country. Inspired by Mr. Thomas's literary zeal Major Yeats-Brown produced his own version of the journey, preceded by the story of his life. Neither writer tells us about his travelling companions, and Mr. Thomas says little about himself. He is merely the instrument by which India is recorded. Starting methodically at the southernmost tip of the peninsula he zigzags back and forth across the land after the manner of Indian railways, describing sights and impressions with unsparing vividness. Superstition, poverty and disease form a pageant of ignorance and filth. Tortures and deformities are self-inflicted in the name of religion. A whole city is cursed with the calamity of elephantiasis. A nation claiming to hold life sacred cares less for human rights than for the right to live of animals and insects. Among the devotees of cults, Mrs. Besant and Rabindranath Tagore are visited, and a yogi, said to be able to raise the dead, produces requested perfumes out of thin air.

Mr. Thomas names his chapters cleverly and leads the reader forward with tempting intimations about the Black Pagoda. He salutes Indian mysticism, and Major Yeats-Brown, by calling the latter his guru, or yogi teacher, and without malice lists the causes of India's shortcomings. At last he arrives at the Black Pagoda itself, only to leave his poor readers completely in the dark. Distant illustrations are excused on the plea that closer views would not be permitted. The object of this whole pilgrimage is dismissed as an "unparalleled obscenity", but cited as the symbol of all India. Even the location of the temple is omitted from the map which serves as endpapers to the book, but the author seems to invite the reader to go and see what he has enjoyed.

Major Yeats-Brown begins his narrative in 1905 when he arrived in India to become an officer in the Seventeenth Cavalry. Claiming to be but a blunt soldier, he writes in a style that is pretentious compared to that of Mr. Thomas, though the meaning is sometimes obscured by a casual omission of significant

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details. The book's title is derived from considering the author's varied experiences as several separate lives.

The youth of nineteen, fresh from Harrow and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, is a fancier of pedigreed dogs and thoroughbred horses. India first charms him with a Nautch dance, then frightens him with the suicides of two dogs at an ancient tomb. He seeks occult enlightenment and is promised the instruction of a guru at Benares. At the latter place he sits at the feet of Mrs. Besant but does not find his guru there. An interlude of healthy exercise and victorious polo follows. Then comes the vigorous hunting of wild boars. The major captures and makes friends with a native who intends to kill him.

At the Taj Mahal he is unexpectedly directed to his promised guru in Benares, but the teacher tells the Englishman he is not yet ready to become a pupil. In another boar hunt his favorite horse is killed and the major returns to Europe for five years of war. In the trenches he is an interpreter, and later in Mesopotamia an observer in the Royal Flying Corps. Captured by Turks he finally escapes to London for Christmas, 1918. Back in India he is wounded in frontier fighting and while recuperating is detailed to accompany Mr. Lowell Thomas.

His itinerary of the four crowded months of travel that follow is strangely enough almost the direct opposite of that described by Mr. Thomas in his two-year version of the trip. There is no statement of when or where the travellers part, but the major is out of the service at last and back with his guru from Benares, who again sends him away to learn occult mysteries for himself. By pretending bewilderment the author subtly and comprehensively conveys the ascetic doctrines of Yoga to the reader. His whole journey is a philosophical progression with only shadowy dream-pictures of the land and people. Except for his drilling, polo and pig-sticking he seems never to come in contact with the real world about him. Of the sordid side of India he sees little. Even the Black Pagoda is speedily dismissed as a primitive but ugly treatise on psycho-analysis. Keenly imaginative and profoundly intellectual he is still unwholesomely tainted with the tropic dalliance and procrastination which passes in the Orient as the threshold of Nirvana. In contrast Mr. Thomas's keen and materialistic observations of physical reality make one wish he were sometimes less unflinchingly accurate.

Major Yeats-Brown is for the philosophically inquiring, Mr. Thomas for the morbidly inquisitive. But for broad-minded seekers after information the two books together will satisfy all tastes and explain all points of view.

LOUIS E. LAFLIN, JR.

WORLD WITHOUT END *by Helen Thomas* (HARPERS. $2.50)

THE romance and marriage of the author and Edward Thomas, the English poet and essayist was narrated in *As It Was*, by H. T., and the book closed with the birth of their first child. *World Without End*, with which is included the earlier book, spans some fifteen years more to the departure of the husband and father for the front.

It is difficult not to be flippant about the entire work. The style, if its simplicity is unconscious, is to be regretted; if the simplicity, as one suspects, is studied, it should be held up as a warning. Why all writers of personal revelation, from those who, in popular domestic journals, tell how they built rock gardens, to the more fortunate whose work appears in bound volumes, feel obliged to use the same grammar-school-composition diction, remains a mystery. Perhaps it is to give the personal touch. At any rate, Mrs. Thomas's book, which abounds incidentally in botanical and topographical lore, and tells how she made houses livable, gives a frank story of her married life, which may interest

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Edward Thomas's admirers. She shows him naïve, selfish, beautiful, passionate, and moody to the point of insanity, condemned all his life to hack work and uncertain of that; she appears as a simple sentimental woman, blindly devoted to him and enjoying nothing so much as catering to him and bearing his children. Both had perfectly jolly times hunting for the first violets and listening to the first cuckoos in spring. The initiate may enjoy this true story. It is to be feared that the Philistines will find it rather funny. Some of us were taught that to tell all one's business was bad taste. A good many seem to have missed this earlier training or to have forgotten it altogether.

ROBERT MOLLOY

THE COURSE OF EMPIRE *edited by Valeska Bari* (COWARD-MCCANN. $4.00)

THE full story of the California gold rush has never yet been adequately told, but it is safe to say that *The Course of Empire* will one day be an important source work for the telling. No single book hitherto has discussed so many phases of the gold discovery and its aftermath, or has cast in convenient form such a body of useful and authentic material.

When Sam Brannan rode down from Sutter's Mill in 1848 with a little bottle of gold dust and nuggets in his uplifted fist, he initiated one of the world's great migrations. The news spread like wildfire. Towns were depopulated and farms were abandoned; ships lay drifting at anchor in San Francisco harbor while their crews, and often their captains as well, deserted to the mines. The shipping offices in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston were besieged by frenzied mobs who waited days in line for a chance to purchase passage around the Horn. Tickets to California were raffled in churches. Hundreds of wagon trains, many of which included no one over twenty-five years of age, set out across the Great Plains, braving thirst and starvation, Indians and cholera, for a chance at the pot of gold.

California in 1849 was a land of lawless youth. The dirty, rough, fiercely bearded miners who crowded the brothels and gambling hells of San Francisco were ordinary young men away from home on a lark—young men who had for the moment no parents or families or ancestors, who were free of convention and restraint, who took a boyish delight in cultivating the fine art of profanity and in calling their settlements by such fearsome or irreverent names as Bloody Gulch and Hell's Delight. Ships from every part of the world brought gamblers, bullies, pickpockets and ladies of pleasure to the feast of gold. The thrifty French government emptied its prisons and paid the passages of scores of impenitent Magdalenes. Under the influx of thousands of gold-seekers, the pleasant Arcadian civilization of Spanish California was buried forever.

Here, in Valeska Bari's compilation, are documents bearing upon every aspect of this glittering and incredible migration. There are narratives set down by men who made the journey to California—around the Horn, across the Isthmus, overland by way of the Great Plains or the Gila Desert. There is James Marshall's own description of the day when he picked up a tiny nugget of gold in Mr. Sutter's mill-race. There are accounts of life at the diggings, and in the mushroom city of San Francisco in the fifties. Most interesting of all are two translated Spanish manuscripts—one by Captain Fernandez, and the other by that lordliest of Spanish Californians, General Vallejo—recording the American seizure of the province and the destruction of the older civilization. In compiling her work, Valeska Bari has had access to the manuscripts in the Bancroft Collection, and to other valuable and unpublished papers in the possession of the California Historical Society and the Society of California Pioneers.

MARGARET WALLACE

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ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS OF THE ANDES *by Philip Ainsworth Means* (SCRIBNER'S. $7.50)

OF THOSE great civilizations which the Spaniards destroyed, perhaps the most interesting, as it was in some ways the most advanced, is that of the Incas. A carefully worked out, well coördinated social structure, wherein every man and woman had his or her appointed place, and to which poverty and unemployment were unknown; a long line of able rulers, who fully recognized and were capable of fulfilling their responsibilities; a religion of exceptional flexibility, which offered a dignified, practically monotheistic concept to the intelligent, while providing an imposing ritual as well as a number of easily comprehended, kindly deities to comfort the simple-minded; with all these for its assets, the Incaic culture was in many ways admirable. A number of things we regard as necessities were lacking; but what is unknown is never missed.

This culture developed from others yet more ancient. After a short account of the geography of the Andean region, Mr. Means tells us what is as yet known of the Chimu, Nazac and Tiahuanaco cultures, and of the silent witnesses they have left behind them in the shape of some curious and remarkable stone-work, and yet more remarkable pottery. The portrait-vases, especially those belonging to the early Chimu period, are really amazing examples of ancient art. These cultures declined and died, and in the eleventh century innumerable small tribes, warring more or less constantly with one another, provided an opportunity for the first Inca chief who can really be called an historical figure, Sinchi Rocca. He became the ruler of a little group of tribes in the Cuzco Valley; tactfully and diplomatically he extended his authority. His successors seem to have inherited his tact as well as his power, and so, sometimes by armed and sometimes by diplomatic conquest, the Empire of the Incas, Sons of the Sun, grew and flourished, until it became the shining splendor the Spaniards found. Mr. Means describes the economic, governmental, social, religious and artistic aspects of the Incaic Empire, devoting some considerable space to the festivals and ceremonials so numerous in the lives not only of the nobles but of the common people as well, and yet more to the achievements of this ancient civilization in the art of the loom. His large, fully illustrated and richly detailed volume is a mine of information concerning phases of history and of archeology about which the majority of us know far too little.

LOUISE MAUNSELL FIELD

THE SCIENCE OF FOLKLORE *by Alexander Haggerty Krappe* (DIAL PRESS. $4.00)

IN HIS Introduction, Mr. Krappe is at great pains to convince his readers that folklore is an exact and positive science; but in the remaining portions of his book he demonstrates clearly that it is not, and never has been, anything of the sort. For folklore, as it is practised in our leading universities, presents little or no objectivity either of attitude or method. On the contrary, the method consists largely in the pedantic and rather haphazard collection of large masses of data about popular literature, and the subsequent filling in of wide gaps with suppositions and hypotheses whose derivation bears little relationship to such accurate information as exists. As yet, few folklorists have interpreted the slender stock of relevant material at their command in any fashion useful either for our knowledge or our pleasure in popular literature, and the impression remains that folklore exists principally for its own sake and for the endless piling up of valueless facts. If this so-called science is to realize the elaborate claims made for it as a supplement to history and a means for making valuable contributions to the study of psychological and social humanity, it

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would seem to be high time that it began to do so. Folklorists have been industriously dissecting fairy tales for a great many years, and Mr. Krappe satisfactorily summarizes what has been accomplished; and the net result so far, it can be honestly stated, is practically nothing. In 1893 Joseph Bédier, in his book, *Les Fabliaux*, pointed out pretty clearly the bounds within which folklore can be useful and about how far it can go. Mr. Krappe joins those who have since criticized Bédier's sensible findings; no one has yet refuted the main lines of his arguments.

As long as he is dealing with descriptive matters, the types of popular literature, the principal characteristics of each type et cetera, Mr. Krappe's study is interesting and useful. And its author avoids many of the absurdities of Lang, Kittredge and other folklorists. It is refreshing to find that he has a clear conception of the nature of popular literature and wastes no time with the phantoms of communal origin or the overflow of the folk-soul. But when he starts the inevitable round of suppositions that are the stock in trade of contemporary medievalism, Mr. Krappe has little to offer.

EUGENE ARMFIELD

SIEGFRIED *by Jean Giraudoux* (DIAL PRESS. $2.00)

WHEN Jean Giraudoux turned from his diplomatic duties at the Quai d'Orsay and risked his reputation as a very successful novelist to stage his own adaptation of *Siegfried et le Limousin* at the Comédie des Champs-Elysées, he became overnight the idol of Paris. Now after a year's run in the French capital, the play has been produced in America by Miss Eva Le Gallienne.

An unknown soldier suffering from amnesia, picked up on the field of battle and re-educated by the German girl, Eva, the anonymous Siegfried Kleist stands at the head of the new government. But he is tortured by the desire to discover his identity. From Paris comes Genevieve Prat to claim him as her lover, Jacques Forestier; and she is presented to him as a teacher of French. Throughout the second and third acts, then, we witness the struggle between Genevieve and Eva, between all that is Latin in Jacques and the Teutonic culture that has been grafted upon him in the past six years. The last act, staged in a frontier customs office, shows the victorious Genevieve taking the hero back to his real *patrie*.

To say that this play is concerned with political or national problems, as many critics both here and abroad have done, is absurd. And it is still further removed from propaganda. The most penetrating of French critics, however, agreed in seeing in *Siegfried* a new kind of theatre in which poetry plays the largest part, in which as in the Romantic drama each character has a right to finish his sentences no matter how long, and whose style presents a new language sparkling with unexpected images and verbal acrobatics. Thanks to Mr. Philip Carr's translation, Giraudoux's delightful style can now be fully enjoyed in English.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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FLEDGLING FICTION

MORE OR LESS VALEDICTORY

It was, as I recall it, just a year ago that I entered upon this mild adventure of reviewing first novels. Just why I did it I cannot now say. Certainly I labored under no illusion as to my capacity to discern genius where others overlooked it, nor was I more partial to the work of inexperienced writers than to the writings of more practised hands. But for many years as a publisher I had enjoyed the semi-annual pleasure of "discovering" at least one new writer. I had cried Lo here! in the spring and in the fall; and oftentimes my pleasure in such discoveries was shared by others, but more often it was not. And I had watched these first-born go out into a world peopled by harried and indifferent reviewers who took what came to their hands and said what they thought of it; peopled moreover by equally harried indifferent readers who took what was forced upon them by booksellers, critics and those well-informed friends who control that mysterious dæmon known as Wordofmouth and thereby the fortunes of all books. I had watched these first-born, I say; but I had done more. I had crooned over them in manuscript, I had sweated over them in proof, and then I had whispered and shouted their praises to reviewers, and booksellers and amiable other persons until rather too often a book I had once known as a good piece of work became enlarged to heroic size; and if it did not receive the praise it seemed to merit it became in my mind the victim of a malicious neglect, of a conspiracy to suppress new talent. I had shouted myself, you see, into an enthusiasm which was perhaps slightly greater than the occasion warranted. Finding it unshared I would murmur bitter words against the public which would not give a hearing to unknown writers at the mere cost of two dollars and an evening's time.

So, having lately abandoned the publishing of fiction, I became a reviewer of sorts. I had no notion, I repeat, of appointing myself Moses to a bewildered generation of novel readers. I suspect I was moved by more personal motives. I wanted to discover whether I had been talking through my hat all these years; whether the recognition of new talent was as chancy a thing as it appeared, and more particularly whether the swans of which every publisher boasts were, as reviewers often maintained, a less noble breed of fowl. Somebody, I had been saying from time to time, should really spend a year or so in reading all the new first novels, studying them comparatively and sifting the true talent from the false. Such a one might make some really valuable discoveries—at best a new Dostoievski, at worst an answer to the question: What Are Our Young Folks Doing? Such a one would at any rate have had a unique experience.

It was at this point that the most amiable editor of my acquaintance interrupted. "Why don't you do it yourself?" he said. "You have been publishing too many novels. Why not read a few for a change? Besides, it is not too late for even you to enjoy a unique experience."

So for a year I have gone painstakingly through the first novels, reading the good and bad alike, knowing in the process pleasure and boredom and the occasional excitement that comes from the discovery that here is a person who can write, and at monthly

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intervals recording, as honestly and as agreeably as I could, my opinion of what I have read. It has been, on the whole, an entertaining experience, but scarcely enlightening. Certainly I have discovered nothing new about the craft of fiction as it is practised by the inexperienced. I have discovered no new genius; and such talent as I have perceived has elsewhere been acclaimed as readily and in equally positive terms. I have made a few quiet wagers with myself about some half-dozen writers whose books have come into my hands during the past year, but a sudden rush of prudence bids me suppress their names. I have, to the other hand, had an uneasy suspicion that I was not always accurately expressing what little opinion I had of various books of which I wrote, and that I, of necessity, have talked a good deal of nonsense about novels which were better dismissed with a curt "not bad" or, at best, "pretty good". Such books will really not bear discussion. And so having gained no wisdom and imparted none, having discovered that there is nothing new to be discovered by the experiment, and being assured, after all, that the commonwealth of letters is safe in other hands, I think it best to call a halt to this undertaking. I shall go no more a-roving through the little world of first novels; I shall never again read through a book which bores me, and I shall certainly never again attempt to say in a predetermined number of words what I think about any book which does not move me strongly.

But at this point I hear you say: This is all very well, but you are overlong in leave-taking. Go if you must, but do not stand forever in the open door—A moment please. I'm not quite done, and there are still a few books I must talk about. There is, for instance, *Three Steeples* (Covici-Friede. $2.50).

My betters tell me that *Three Steeples* is overwritten, and as this is a term whose meaning I have never precisely understood, I am not prepared to controvert the charge. Mr. Leroy MacLeod's writing is luxuriant with metaphors, but to me these metaphors appear to be of the stuff of his thought and not something put on for adornment. You can tell the literary coxcomb by his verbs, for in choosing these he is most likely to strain and posture. But Mr. MacLeod's verbs, however uncommon, neatly fit and illuminate his sense. He is, I take it, a man who sees things naturally in associative terms, whose mind leaps the far distance between unlike things, finding some congenial element in the two and proclaiming it unconsciously. His figures of speech are not always true and are sometimes, although rarely, commonplace, but they spring from an honest perception. Certainly I find in them no evidence of straining after a startling effect, and often in a casual line he creates an image of authentic beauty.

As for the book, it has substance and dignity but not quite, I think, life. Its scope is impressive, for he has managed to get between covers a whole village and to present it in scrupulous and intimate detail. Chapter after chapter reveals some sharply vivid scene of village life—men gossiping in a barber shop, half innocent of bucolic dissipations, of the thousand varied activities that go on within the limits of the community. Little by little these merge to form a common stream of action—a stream dammed and directed by the Durkens, father and son, who overshadow the town. They love it with a stubborn relentless devotion, these two, and attempt to remake it into the thing which they desire, giving no thought to the needs and wishes of their fellow-villagers. So the elder Durken builds an unwanted church and a grain elevator which first impoverishes, then kills him. And the fanatic son comes home to preach a religion that is harsh and inhuman and which in the end betrays him in turn.

All this is well told, brought out in scenes vividly described, developed through the mouths and actions of people who bear a faithful resemblance to reality. No less, it is

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all singularly unmoving. The reader enjoys no intimate sense of contact with these people, he feels no response to their passions. Even Ab, the one-eyed sinner, and Wilbur Allen, the blind agnostic, although they are touched with life, are not quickened into full existence. The other persons in the book, intimately as they are presented, are mere portraits. One reads of them, untroubled by any share of their emotions; one accepts the tragedy of the Durkens with the interest of an aloof spectator. One applauds and admires the book, but does not share in its drama.

I have not spoken of the important part which religious fervor plays in *Three Steeples* because it, too, does not seem to me a very vital element in the book. Yet it is odd that after a long, uninterrupted concentration upon other matters by our novelists, there should suddenly appear two novels in which religion reappears as the central passion in the lives of certain characters. In *This Our Exile* by David Burnham (Scribner's $2.50), religion is a much more potent, if less ostentatious, element than it is in Mr. MacLeod's novel. I feel about all the members of the fascinating Eaton family that they are what they are because of their faith. In the midst of a worldly experience their religion recurrently appears, sometimes as an inhibiting force, sometimes as a refuge. Such a phenomenon in the work of a member of one of the godless generations is rare indeed.

But this is all by the by. Mr. Burnham is one of the few people about whom I am most actively tempted to make wagers. His novel, so alive, so spirited, is more to my liking than any first novel I have read for several months. In setting and in tempo it recalls Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*, and there are traces in the book of Fitzgerald's influence just as there are subtler evidences of the influence of Hemingway. Yet *This Our Exile* is not imitative. Mr. Burnham's manner has been tempered by example, but it is substantially his own; and his people, both the young and the old, are plucked directly from life.

I cannot let the book pass without commenting with admiration upon the skill with which a sudden alteration in the character of Mrs. Eaton is presented after her husband's death. This might so easily have been bungled, but here it is handled excellently.

Mr. Ford Madox Ford has expressed his admiration for *Orange Valley* by Howard Baker (Coward-McCann. $2.00) and, for me, I find good things in it—a background well drawn, individual scenes competently handled, a convincing exploration of the mind of a central character. But the speech of all the characters is droning and stilted like that of a deaf-mute who has learned to talk. The book is written in a monotone and its total effect is one of tedium. There is spirit if little body to *The Years That Crown* by Gwen Clear (Longmans, Green. $2.50), a slender bit of work which betrays a sensitive mind, hovering delicately over the lives of a group of people, but never quite encompassing them. . . . In *The Making of a Lady* (Doubleday, Doran. $2.50), Sara Haardt presents a competent picture of a Southern town and of the rise to social eminence of Beulah Miller, born "on the wrong side of the tracks". This is an uneven book, at moments brilliantly alive, at others wooden. Beulah herself misses being an interesting person, although she, too, has her moments. . . . From Longmans, Green come two Zenda romances which move rapidly even though each seems to be somewhat diluted. *The Black Ghost of the Highway* ($2.00) by Gertrude Linnell has not merely action but a pleasant dash of humor and good characterization. Henry von Rhau's *To the Victor* ($2.00) is more in the conventional tradition —a dash of McCutcheon, a dash of Wren, sweetened to taste—that is all.

And now I really must be going.

GUY HOLT

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE, LIFE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, IN COÖPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF AMERICA

The statisticians who bother their heads about such things announce that there were some ten thousand new books brought out in the United States in 1930, which is either fewer or more than in 1929. The importance of these figures escapes us. Only about four hundred new books came under this reporter's notice, through the medium of the library reports, in 1930, and of those not more than one hundred were fortunate enough to "make" the Monthly Score.

—F.P.S.

NOVELS

1.	ANGEL PAVEMENT	*J. B. Priestley*	HARPERS
2.	THE DEEPENING STREAM	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT, BRACE
3.	PHILIPPA	*Anne Douglas Sedgwick*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
4.	YEARS OF GRACE	*Margaret Ayer Barnes*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
5.	CAKES AND ALE	*W. Somerset Maugham*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
6.	SEED	*Charles G. Norris*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
7.	TWENTY-FOUR HOURS	*Louis Bromfield*	STOKES
8.	IMPERIAL PALACE*	*Arnold Bennett*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
9.	CIMARRON	*Edna Ferber*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
10.	THE WATERS UNDER THE EARTH	*Martha Ostenso*	DODD, MEAD
11.	THE WATER GIPSIES*	*A. P. Herbert*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
12.	BLOWING CLEAR	*Joseph C. Lincoln*	APPLETON

GENERAL

1.	THE STORY OF SAN MICHELE	*Axel Munthe*	DUTTON
2.	LITTLE AMERICA	*Richard E. Byrd*	PUTNAM
3.	THE LIVES OF A BENGAL LANCER	*Major F. Yeats-Brown*	VIKING
4.	THE GREEN PASTURES	*Marc Connelly*	FARRAR & RINEHART
5.	EDUCATION OF A PRINCESS*	*Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia*	VIKING
6.	THE ADAMS FAMILY	*James Truslow Adams*	LITTLE, BROWN
7.	HUMANITY UPROOTED	*Maurice Hindus*	CAPE & SMITH
8.	INDIA: LAND OF THE BLACK PAGODA*	*Lowell Thomas*	CENTURY
9.	THE MYSTERIOUS UNIVERSE	*Sir James Jeans*	MACMILLAN
10.	THE CONQUEST OF HAPPINESS	*Bertrand Russell*	LIVERIGHT
11.	LONE COWBOY	*Will James*	SCRIBNER'S
12.	THE MARKS OF AN EDUCATED MAN*	*Albert Edward Wiggam*	BOBBS-MERRILL

*This title has not previously appeared in the Monthly Score

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